



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Wormwood Scrubs

**For reporting year
1 June 2020 - 31 May 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, of 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 Wormwood Scrubs was built with prison labour between 1875 and 1891. It is a category B local male prison, holding adult men and some young adults. It accepts sentenced and remand prisoners over the age of 21, and young adults (those aged 18-21) on remand – both groups coming from the local catchment area. It is a designated resettlement prison and has an operational capacity of 1,273. (This figure has been subject to occasional temporary reduction.)

The prison has five main wings. Only two of those wings provide single cell accommodation. The first night centre (FNC) holds 36 new arrivals, usually only for one night.

There is a detoxification unit (the Conibeere unit), with space for 55 new arrivals requiring substance use detoxification and stabilisation; and a 17-bed residential healthcare unit. The Elizabeth Fry unit on E wing (E4) is for prisoners requiring additional support.

Education and training are provided by Novus, and healthcare services by Practice Plus Health Group Health and Rehabilitation Services Limited. The mental health provision is by Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust.

The community rehabilitation company (CRC) is London CRC, operated by MTC Novo. (As of June 2021, just after the end of the Board's reporting period, the CRC is now directly under HMPPS with the return to the national probation service.)

On 31 May 2021, there were 1,080 prisoners, of whom 311 were categorised as foreign nationals. On the same date there were 94 young adult prisoners (aged 18-21), 83 prisoners aged 50-59, 20 prisoners aged 60-69 and nine prisoners over 70 years old.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

This report is, in reality, a review of a Covid-19 year at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. For the Board it has meant almost no physical contact with the prison, and for the prisoners it has meant precious little contact with the outside world – at a time when the outside world was having precious little contact with each other. For much of the reporting year it has meant a 23-hour confinement for many prisoners.

From March 2020 (before this reporting year) to August 2020, the Board stopped all visits to the prison and instituted a system of remote monitoring. With the exception of a short period from September to mid-December, when three members intermittently visited parts of the prison with great effect, that remained the case until mid-May 2021.

Remote monitoring had the advantage of maintaining contact with the prison but did not permit Board members to verify or challenge much of what they were being told. Necessarily some of what is in this year's report is information gleaned solely from the prison. This is not to say it is not accurate or reliable, but to highlight the source from which it comes.

During remote monitoring, Board members continued to receive and deal with applications from prisoners, which often assisted the Board in getting a fuller picture of the regime within the prison. Members were also able to attend meetings remotely. The Board received daily updates from the prison and also received notices to prisoners/staff and weekly prisoner newsletters.

At the end of June 2020 a new governing governor took up his post. He has attended monthly Board meetings via Zoom, and has appointed a business and communications manager – one of whose responsibilities is to directly liaise with the Board at least weekly.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The Board reported last year a number of initiatives aimed at making the prison a safer environment: a scanner at reception, a full-time police officer within the prison, weekly meetings to review CCTV, and improvements to the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documentation. The introduction of those initiatives has brought positive results. There has been an overall reduction in recorded violence, following the fall in the second half of our last reporting year. (4.3.5)

Significantly, the prison benefited during the last year from a number of safety interventions through charities: Catch22 (gang-related violence), Belong (mediation) and Safety Box (anti-knife crime). It is very disappointing to note that, because of funding cuts, only the full-time police officer and Belong remain on site. (4.3.1)

The targeted use of the whole-body scanner based at reception assists greatly in the recovery of contraband, but reduced staff availability (often Covid-19 related) has meant that it is not always in full use. (4.4.1)

The inadequate use of body worn video cameras (BWVCs) continues to be a concern. The prison has made them easier to access by placing them next to where officers draw their keys, but large numbers remain unclaimed each day. (4.5.4)

The efficacy of the prison complaints system has been subject to criticism by the Board over the course of the year. The speed and completeness of responses has been seriously inept at times. A new management structure and review processes may alleviate this. (5.7.3)

There has been a marked decrease in use of force (UoF) incidents. This may be pandemic related, but there has also been an emphasis in the prison on having a weekly review of such incidents as well as monthly UoF meetings. However, the statistics for some months show a disproportionate number of black prisoners represented in such incidents (4.5.3; 5.4.5).

Following a prisoner's death in custody shortly after the prisoner's arrival, the Board remains of the view that the initial admission processes require reform. There is a review of processes in train, but this is not a new issue, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) among others has highlighted it.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Some renovation work continued during the pandemic, with new windows installed, redecoration on A and C wings, and refurbishment of the visits and reception areas, and of several shower blocks and serveries. However, many of the prison's facilities remain in poor condition, and it remains a source of shame that at the end of May 2021, 118 prisoners were sharing cells designed for one person only. The antiquated nature of the infrastructure meant that at a point in November 2020 there was either no heating on a wing, or it was heated to an unhealthily high temperature. (5.1.2)

Access to showers during the pandemic has occasionally been restricted. Most prisoners got a daily shower, but in October 2020 prisoners on A wing who had tested positive did not get any time out of cell or showers at all until their isolation was complete. (5.1.4)

One of the most frequent and persistent sources of complaints received by the Board has been the quality and quantity of the food provided for prisoners. There are persistent issues relating to the equipment in the kitchens not working or not being repaired, the provision of specialist diets, the timing of meals and food hygiene. (5.1.7)

The key worker scheme has been unable to function as originally intended and is another casualty of the pandemic. However, the prison was able to keep a skeleton scheme going by contacting prisoners through in-cell telephony. This ensured that the most vulnerable prisoners received a weekly call. (5.3.7)

The welcome appointment of an equalities officer has provided an impetus for the development of a range of activities, from a coaching programme for black, Asian and minority ethnic staff to events around Black History Month in October 2020. Prisoner equality representatives are present on each wing, but the number of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) is low. This may be because prisoners continue to use the normal complaints procedure, but it is another area the Board will monitor closely going forward.

The vexed issue of property remains a concern. The problem of property going missing on transfer has been reduced this year as there were far fewer transfers. But a communication failure meant that one prisoner waited eight months for his property to be moved from the property store to his cell. (5.8.2)

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

The pandemic has put a strain on many medical providers and the prison has been no different. A comprehensive plan for testing/isolating and later vaccinating was put in place very early on, and this rigorous policy led to no positive tests for Covid-19 from February 2021 to the end of the reporting year. Take up of the vaccine is lower than healthcare had hoped, but not significantly out of line with comparison groups in the community. (6.6.2)

The mental health of prisoners however has suffered greatly, and this manifested itself in a significantly increased number of mental health referrals. Prolonged cellular confinement, necessary to control the spread of Covid-19, must be responsible in part for this increase. The Board also notes with dismay that during the pandemic the prison reported an increased number of prisoners with acute mental health problems being brought into prison, perhaps reflecting the lack of alternative provision in the community. (6.3.1)

The consequence of this increase in mental ill-health is that although all emergency and urgent referrals have been seen within the recommended time frames (24 hours and 48 hours, respectively), routine referrals are not seen within the target of five days. Some prisoners have been made to wait as long as four weeks.

Last year the Board raised concerns about the number of cancelled external hospital appointments. This year has seen a mixed picture of cancellations due to a lack of staff to escort prisoners, but also an increase in prisoners refusing to attend. The reason for this refusal is often not noted in the documentation. (6.2.2)

During the pandemic a community psychiatric nurse (CPN) has attended segregation rounds and provided input to the ACCT reviews. However, it is of great concern to the Board that the learning disability nurse has left, and the departure of the head of psychology and her deputy has left the prison with no psychology service. This is a huge gap in provision for a very vulnerable group and has led to a very long waiting list for therapeutic interventions. (6.3.5)

Some drug rehabilitation interventions continued through the Forward Trust via in-cell distraction packs and contact via in-cell telephones. Mandatory drug testing was suspended in February 2020 and had not resumed by the end of the reporting period. This is said to be lower on the list of priorities as the prison moves towards re-introducing the full regime. (4.6.5)

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The pandemic brought about the almost complete shut-down of work, with the exception of essential activities such as laundry and the kitchen. It also meant pausing most accredited learning – the provider (Novus) withdrew from the prison – and instead a number of in-cell learning packs were provided to prisoners who wanted to continue their education. By the end of the reporting period there was still no face-to-face teaching. (7.2)

Ofsted undertook a 'virtual' inspection in March, noting that there was insufficient engagement with in-cell education, and that increased pay rates and incentive schemes had been drawn up to encourage more prisoners to access education.

More encouraging was the opening of a new staff canteen named 'The Escape'. In April, a dismal room was turned into a welcoming and much improved café in which 12 prisoners undertake a 12-week catering/hospitality training course, which will equip them for employment on release.

The closure of all social visits because of Covid-19 restrictions meant a huge reduction in valuable family contact for prisoners. Their gradual re-introduction along with 'Purple Visits' – video calls – has meant that prisoners have been able to see their families, albeit in a restricted way. In-cell telephony and additional phone credit have also helped to maintain family/friendship links.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

1. In our last report we urged the continuing funding of projects which have contributed to making the prison safer. What we have seen is the opposite – a reduction in funding – and we ask that the minister urgently reconsider budget cuts which will only put in peril any progress made.
2. We again urge the minister to make it mandatory for officers to wear and use their BWVC when they are in situations where they may have to use force against prisoners. Can the minister also tell the Board what has happened to the review of PSI 04/2017, promised in the last response by the minister to the Board in February 2021?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

1. When will the final (as opposed to draft) policy framework on prisoners' property, promised in February 2021 for 'wider circulation shortly' in the HMPPS response to our last report, be published?
2. In the absence of this, can there be a directive to all prisons that they should, in so far as they are able, ensure that a prisoner's property follows him when he is transferred to another prison?

TO THE GOVERNOR

1. Can the Governor ensure that investigations will be undertaken to consider and monitor the disproportionate incidents in some months of use of force against black prisoners? Following such investigations can any necessary training be provided for prison officers?
2. Given that there is acknowledgement within the prison that the food, its production and nutritional value and its quantity are an issue, can the Governor consider with some urgency how this can be remedied? If there is to be consultation, the Board suggests that this should be done speedily.

3. When a prisoner refuses to attend a hospital appointment, can the reason for that refusal be noted on the relevant documentation?

3.4 Progress since the last report

The Governor has arranged for BWVCs to be moved to a convenient place for prison officers to collect them. This should be encouraging news. However, so far it seems to have made little difference to either the number collected each day or used.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 The Board has been limited in its ability to monitor reception processes this year due to the pandemic. The reception area has been refurbished and is now better adapted to receiving those with a disability. Screening processes include Covid-19 testing as well as drugs and other health screening. More targeted use is being made of whole-body scanning (4.6) for contraband, but as in the past the availability and funding of staff to make full use of the scanner is not a given.

4.1.2 The Board has previously noted concern that potentially serious issues may slip through screening and early days processes unnoticed, or may not be adequately followed up and signposted to other staff or healthcare. A death shortly after the arrival of a prisoner this year has resulted in further review of processes (4.2.5). While welcome, this was reactive. This is not a new issue and has previously been flagged by HMIP. The ending of funding for charity-run screening on arrival for gang- and violence-related issues (4.3.2) is of concern, as some of these interventions had appeared promising.

4.1.3 The Board is told that court discharge and arrival processes have improved and that court vehicles now leave on time, but the release in error of a prisoner in March 2021, followed by a further release in error a few weeks later suggests that there are areas where improvement is required, and that Covid-19 protocols may have diverted or stretched resources. The perennial issue of property and medication being delayed or lost in transit in and out of the prison remains a continual source of unhappiness and complaint among prisoners this year. (5.8)

4.1.4 The Board remains concerned that prisoners' stays in the first night centre (FNC) are too long. The Board understands that the prison is now making concerted efforts to move some obstructive prisoners with gang affiliation issues from the induction wing (B) to improve throughput, but there are still long-term 'lodgers' in the FNC, including two prisoners who have been there for more than a year because there is nowhere else to accommodate them pending transfer (4.4.2). The Board is pleased to note that a Listener has now also been allocated to the FNC, and that the chaplaincy team now conduct welfare checks on arrival.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 The Board regrets that there were two apparently self-inflicted deaths in custody this year, one shortly after the prisoner's arrival.

4.2.2 The prison has introduced better follow-up and support for prisoners after incidents such as a death in custody, including a weekly briefing letter to prisoners providing information and signposting sources of support.

4.2.3 A multidisciplinary weekly safety intervention meeting discusses the most vulnerable prisoners. The chaplaincy, which conducts weekly welfare checks on all prisoners, has been a welcome constant during the pandemic and remains an invaluable resource.

4.2.4 Despite the prison being under Covid-19 measures for the entire reporting year, recorded incidents of self-harm maintained the downward momentum from the last quarter of last year, averaging 23.5 incidents per month (compared with an average of 28 per month in the last reporting year), totalling 282 incidents involving 200 prisoners (379/216 last year). The Board notes that the use or attempted use of ligatures is not recorded as self-harm, and to what extent the figures are affected by classification or under-reporting/inconsistent reporting is unclear.

4.2.5 In the reporting year, 608 ACCT documents were opened (down from 663 last year), a rate of approximately 38-40 per month, with a spike following awareness training after a death in custody. Safety meetings review young offenders under ACCT and prisoners requiring constant observation. The Board has been unable to attend ACCT reviews in person this year, or to monitor the accuracy and completeness of ACCT paperwork; but the Board has been told that last year's improvements in the review and closure of paperwork have been maintained. New ACCT processes are being introduced, accompanied by further staff training.

4.2.6 The introduction of in-cell telephones and WayOut TV (a useful source of information and signposting to sources of help) has been well received by prisoners and is likely to have helped to mitigate some of the effects of lockdown, especially when visits by family were not possible. Unsurprisingly there were increases in calls to Listeners, averaging over 300 per month in the first half of the year, slowing to 260 in the second half of the year (pre-pandemic numbers being approximately 70-80). The dominant concerns were feelings of isolation, mental health concerns, and worries about family and relationships. Calls to Samaritans fell after family contacts were reinstated (from 250-300 per month in the first half to below 100 in the second half of the year).

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 During the last reporting year the prison received funding for safety interventions through charities such as Belong (mediation following incidents in prison), Catch-22 (reduction of gang-related violence in prisons) and Safety Box (anti-knife crime group intervention); and funded a full-time police officer on site to improve the investigation of violent crime. Due to funding cuts, only Belong and the police officer will continue.

4.3.2 The prison had previously also been given additional resources aimed at improving safety - part of the ministerially-sponsored 10 Prisons Project, with a clear goal of reducing violence. This included the provision of eight operational support grades (OSG) directed to improving searching, mail monitoring and phone monitoring and had a positive impact, contributing to the prison being a much safer place. The Board is particularly disappointed by the withdrawal of these additional resources at short notice.

4.3.3 A weekly multidisciplinary safety intervention meeting considers self-harm, violence management and the handling and safeguarding of the most challenging and vulnerable prisoners. A monthly safety meeting tracks statistical safety data. All violent incidents are investigated by the safety team, led by Belong. The Board has been able to attend remotely, and the meetings appear very valuable. The challenge support and interventions plan (CSIP), a multidisciplinary approach to individuals who pose a high risk of violence, was paused due to the pandemic. It has now been re-launched.

4.3.4 Many prisoners this year will have spent their time largely in isolation, with limited opportunity to associate with prisoners beyond their immediate half landing. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the prison reports that some prisoners have felt safer and less at risk of weapons and gang related violence.

4.3.5 The reduction in recorded violence noted in the second half of last year has been maintained. Recorded assaults were markedly down at 258 (last year 452), averaging 21.5 per month (average 25 from January to May 2020), although it should be noted that this year's figures come from the Prison National Offender Management Information System (P-NOMIS) and may therefore be under-recorded. Of these, 152 were prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (254 last year), and 106 were assaults on staff (198 last year). There have been occasional spikes (for example in D wing in December 2020 after an intake of challenging prisoners over a short period), and sporadic outbreaks of cell damage (for example a prisoner destroyed five cells in the segregation unit over a weekend in April, leaving B wing without heating); but the prison overall remained remarkably stable during the period of restrictions.

4.3.6 The Board understands that more than 20% of the staff have never worked in the prison under a normal regime. It remains to be seen whether the improvements in safety will be sustained as the prison returns to normal and pressures increase.

4.4 Prisoners with specific vulnerabilities

4.4.1 The pandemic increased existing pressures on accommodation generally. Some vulnerable prisoners have felt safer when isolated from others by Covid-19 restrictions (4.3), but the suspension of group and other specialist support during the pandemic has impacted their wellbeing as the provision of alternative sources of support has been very limited.

4.4.2 The physical environment of the prison remains unsuited to wheelchair users and others with a physical disability, although improvements have been made to reception (4.1). The Board remains concerned that some prisoners remain in the FNC where there is little opportunity for socialisation, education, and activities (4.1.4). In May 2020 there had been some relaxation of restrictions elsewhere in the prison, but prisoners in the FNC, despite having some association time, had no access to fresh air or exercise outside because of staff shortages. Two transgender prisoners on long sentences have been accommodated in the FNC for more than a year. Some older prisoners also remain on the healthcare wing for want of anywhere more suitable, and there appears to be little provision for their specific needs and interests.

4.4.3 The mentoring and support unit for vulnerable prisoners on E wing was very successful before the pandemic, but the restrictions have derailed plans to develop this further with the Seacole centre (a day facility providing a range of social and therapeutic activities). The prison's psychology support staff are severely under-resourced and stretched and it remains to be seen whether these plans will revive.

4.4.4 The Board regards young prisoners as a vulnerable group. Wormwood Scrubs has significant numbers of young men in custody (95 in January, 95 in March, 107 in May) many of whom are in prison for the first time. Their pandemic has been spent in a mainly adult Victorian prison with little time out of cell, limited social contact with others, little exercise, little or no contact with family, legal uncertainties, often

appalling food and little or no meaningful activity or purpose, let alone activity appropriate to their age and maturity. The Board accepts the challenges faced by the Prison Service this year but the legacy of the prolonged confinement of young people in such conditions can only be guessed at.

4.5 Use of force

4.5.1 There were 651 recorded UoF incidents in the reporting year (an average of 54 recorded incidents per month), down from 854 in the previous reporting year – a marked decrease of about a third – continuing the downward trend of the last three quarters of that year. As previously, a significant proportion of the incidents involved the use of guiding holds. The prison population increased by approximately 90 men during the reporting year.

4.5.2 The decrease mirrors a decrease in violent incidents this reporting year (4.3.5) despite an increase in the proportion of severely mentally ill and challenging prisoners in the prison (6.3.1) and the other pressures of the pandemic. The continued downward trend may in part be pandemic related. But it also coincides with continued efforts by the prison to review incidents, as a quality assurance and learning exercise, in a weekly meeting in addition to the monthly UoF meeting. Seventy-one percent of the reporting year's cases were reviewed, the remainder not being reviewed due to technical issues, non-availability of CCTV in parts of the prison, and absence of BWVC footage due in part to continuing underuse of BWVC by staff [4.5.4]. Front line staff have been encouraged to complete UoF paperwork using monthly completion figures, but this may now be superseded by new IT processes associated with recording these and other statistics.

4.5.3 The weekly meetings also consider whether any groups are disproportionately represented in UoF incidents. The table below sets out ethnicity figures averaged on 30 November 2020 (with 4 June 2020 in parentheses for comparison).

Ethnicity	% of all UoF incidents	% of the prison population
Asian	12.3 (10.4)	14 (15)
Black	38.0 (42.6)	28 (27)
Mixed	4.7 (5.5)	6 (5)
White	34.3 (35.6)	45 (45)
Other	1.5 (3.9)	4 (3)
Not stated	8.6 (1.5)	2 (4)

There were several months when there was no significant disproportionality between ethnicities.

4.5.4 The Board has previously expressed concern that the use of BWVC is at best inconsistent, representing a lost opportunity to collect valuable information and evidence and decreasing the deterrent effect where incidents are recorded. After intervention by the Board, there have been renewed attempts to persuade trained front-line staff to use them and the pickup point has been changed to make it more convenient, but they are still not being used routinely despite being a uniform

requirement. Spot checks carried out by IMB members in December 2020 showed that on average, only about one third to a half were being drawn.

4.6 Substance misuse

4.6.1 Despite a year spent largely under tough restrictions, illicit drug supply and use and the identification and management of those with substance misuse problems remain a serious challenge.

4.6.2 Prisoners are screened on arrival and those with known or admitted substance abuse issues are notified to the Forward Trust, who provide care and support to those with substance misuse issues in the prison. Prisoners who do not admit to problems on arrival are also encouraged to engage. Prisoners requiring stabilisation or detoxification go to the Conibeere unit in the first instance. During the pandemic, in-cell support from the Forward Trust has been limited to visits, activity packs and support via in-cell telephones, as group therapy has had to be suspended (6.3.4).

4.6.3 There are welcome moves to expand current incentivised living arrangements for those who wish to live drug free using the established services of the Forward Trust. However, these will engage relatively few prisoners, and only those motivated to take part.

4.6.4 The increased use of scanners (4.1) has improved security. The prison reports successes in screening incoming mail, although sham private legal correspondence is a current challenge. With routes into the prison and drug related activity becoming more difficult in lockdown, the prison saw an increase in attempts to get smaller consignments such as cannabis secreted in Kinder eggs, tobacco, and phones into the prison over the prison walls and using drones. There has also been a reported increase in contraband brought in by recently released prisoners recalled after breach of licence, probably often to order. Security upgrades and significant improvements in gate security and other areas were nearing completion in May 2021.

4.6.5 At its last inspection, HMIP noted that the quality and follow up of mandatory drug testing (MDT) data was impacted by redeployment of skilled MDT staff who did not have sufficient time to complete follow up work, and that some tests were not submitted for analysis at all. The Board notes that testing of prisoners, which was suspended at the end of February 2020, has still not resumed. As at the end of May 2021, the prison was not in any hurry to reinstate it, citing staffing issues and a wish to direct limited resources towards restarting the daily regime.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 Ongoing infrastructure improvement works which had been halted during the early months of the pandemic resumed in the third quarter of 2020. Significant enhancements include replacement windows on the Conibeere unit, A wing and E wing; refurbishment of both the visits and reception areas as well as several shower blocks and serveries across the prison; re-decorated cells on A wing and C wing; and new flooring on E wing. However, many of the prison's facilities remain in poor condition. At the end of the reporting period, over 200 prisoners continued to be housed in overcrowded cells which are not fit for sharing.

5.1.2 Starting in October 2020, the Board began to receive regular complaints about the prison being both too hot (during the day) and too cold (at night). It took approximately three months for the serious problems with heat control to be resolved, during which time prisoners' wellbeing was significantly adversely affected. (It is hoped that a replacement heating project begun after the end of this reporting period may alleviate the problems.)

5.1.3 The Board understands from the prison's management that regular decency checks of cells are undertaken by the senior management team (SMT) in order to ensure that all prisoners have access to essentials such as clean kit, furniture, cleaning products and functioning electrical equipment. WayOut TV is now available in all cells, as is in-cell telephony. New in-cell furniture was installed on the Conibeere unit.

5.1.4 Prisoners' access to showers was curtailed, at times severely, during various stages of the pandemic. During a localised lockdown on C wing in mid-October 2020, for example, prisoners were informed that they would receive only one shower per week (although the Board understands that the prison in fact endeavoured to provide shower access every two to three days). Additional phone credit was added to affected prisoners' accounts to enable them to inform their families about the lockdown. During a rota visit carried out at the end of October 2020, it was noted that prisoners on A wing who had tested positive for Covid-19 had only one shower a week as the showers had to be cleaned and sanitised after each use.

5.1.5 The tidiness and cleanliness of the prison's external areas varied over the course of the reporting year. During a rota visit in October 2020, for example, the grounds at the rear of C and D wings were found to be full of litter, posing a risk to health and a danger of vermin spreading. The situation had improved by the end of the calendar year, although some external areas remained covered in layers of rubbish.

5.1.6 There were recurring issues with the laundry in the fourth quarter of 2020 (coinciding with the heat control problem), which the Board was told were due to staff shortages. A rota visit carried out in November 2020 highlighted that tracksuits were being replaced without reference to size. Problems with kit change and hoarding were acknowledged by the governor at the subsequent board meeting.

5.1.7 The quality and delivery of food, as well as the maintenance of essential kitchen equipment, presented major issues throughout the reporting year. By August 2020, the blast chiller (essential for cooling food quickly and ensuring that dishes

retain their taste, texture and nutritional value) had been out of use for months, and all four boiling pans were not functioning, causing significant issues for the operation of the kitchen. By December 2020, a new dishwasher that had been delivered in January 2020 had still not been plumbed in, a delay which in the Board's opinion is wholly unacceptable. Observed standards of compliance with food hygiene varied between rota visits.

5.1.8 During the reporting year, the prison struggled to comply with relevant legislation and rules regarding the provision of meals. Prisoners were on restricted menus throughout the pandemic, and the prison did not consistently meet prisoners' individual dietary requirements. By way of example, in September 2020, a (meat-eating) diabetic prisoner described being offered an identical (vegetarian) hot meal every day of the week and complained that the food was repeatedly thawed and re-frozen, making it unpalatable. A rota visit to the kitchen in May 2021 confirmed that food was being prepared and packaged several days in advance of being served.

5.1.9 From November 2020 onwards, weekday lunches were cold meal packs delivered to cell doors at approximately 11am. On Monday to Friday, the evening meal was the hot meal, served in takeaway containers and distributed in the afternoon together with a cold breakfast pack. Although there were benefits of prisoners consuming food in their cells (in particular, a reduction in bullying and safety issues at the serveries), the system of delivering packaged meals to cell doors adversely affected meal quality. In addition, complaints were received about inadequate portion sizes. Regrettably, a food comment book is no longer available to prisoners to voice their feedback and concerns.

5.1.10 On a more positive note, from November 2020 HMPPS provided vitamin D supplements free of charge to all prisoners through the canteen in order to help boost their vitamin D levels.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 The segregation unit consists of 18 cells. There are also two bare special cells, which are used only in exceptional circumstances; nine occasions in total for 2020/2021 and for very short periods. Three cells are designed as 'anti-smash' cells, furnished in stainless steel, with everything fixed to the ground. During the reporting year new windows have been installed and old furniture is in the process of being replaced. Cells are frequently out of use because of dirty protests, deliberate damage or flooding. There have been occasions during the reporting year when the number of cells needing repair has brought the unit close to capacity. There is a laundry facility that ensures a good supply of kit. There are regular complaints about lack of radios. The Board understands that the shortage is often due to radios being smashed by prisoners.

5.2.2 During the reporting year the Board has made almost no visits to the segregation unit, so is unable to comment on the cleanliness and maintenance of cells and the common parts, including the showers and servery.

5.2.3 There are two small exercise yards, and all segregated prisoners get daily exercise and showers.

5.2.4 Segregation reviews are held weekly, and the Board has been able to attend through a conference call line. The efficiency of the system was initially patchy, and it

continues not to work as it should. There have been periods when good order or discipline (GOOD) reviews have not been held at the time pre-arranged for the IMB to attend, although the segregation governor continues to reinforce the need to maintain reviews at the specified time. It has been difficult to participate fully in the reviews, but the Board considers that the importance of prisoners knowing that a Board member is on the line outweighs the problems of hearing and understanding what is being said. Long-term prisoners who refuse to leave the segregation unit and return to the wings are a problem, but the segregation governor and staff continually review and update plans for a return to normal location in discussion with the prisoner. Where a prisoner has been segregated as a result of gang violence or debt it can be problematic to identify a location where the prisoner accepts the danger of retaliation can be avoided, so that the segregation unit is perceived as the only safe place. This is particularly so in the case of high-risk prisoners who require a single cell. During the reporting year 13 men were in segregation for 42 days or longer, 7 for 84 days or longer, 2 for 120 days and 1 for 160 days.

5.2.5 Adjudications are dealt with daily, and only the most serious charges are now being heard, with staff on the wings encouraged to manage poor behaviour themselves rather than send the prisoner to the segregation unit. The number of adjudications has fallen over the year and there is no longer a backlog of unheard cases. Adjudications referred to the independent adjudicator are held virtually, using a computer that circulates between several of the London prisons. The system appears to work well and is expected to remain in place once the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

5.2.6 There are two mental health nurses who complete rounds two to three times a week and InReach provides support with activity/distraction packs. Those on an ACCT have enhanced ACCT reviews and their care maps are regularly updated.

5.2.7 Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings have been held regularly throughout the year and the Board has been able to attend by telephone. In October 2019, a governor was appointed with sole responsibility for segregation. This has continued to provide a focus for improvements to management of the unit that have had a beneficial impact on segregated prisoners, focused more clearly on their needs and wellbeing. During the period the Board has not been in the prison the governor has maintained a crucial point of contact and information.

5.2.8 The following table shows the number of prisoners held in the segregation unit under the different rules governing segregation:

	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
GOOD	35	5	12	34
CC	41	10	7	15
R53	25	16	14	38

GOOD – Good order or discipline

CC – Cellular confinement

R53 – Those who need to be kept apart under Rule 53 of the Prison Rules 1999 while they wait for an adjudication to start

5.2.9 **Ethnicity**

During the year the majority of prisoners held in segregation have been consistently white or black, with a smaller but significant number of an Asian background.

	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
White	56	57	79	18
Black	56	62	78	18
Asian	26	10	34	4

5.2.10 **Religion**

Those that declare a religion are principally Muslim, but a large number are Church of England or profess no religion. There have been smaller numbers of other religions, including Rastafarian and Jewish, and appropriate meals are provided where necessary. All prisoners are visited by the chaplaincy.

	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
Church of England	9	2	6	7
Muslim	19	12	17	36
Roman Catholic	8	4	8	7

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

5.3.1 The Board has not visited regularly throughout the reporting year so can only report on figures and information supplied by the prison. Applications from prisoners, both written and left on the answerphone, give some indication of staff-prisoner relationships, but this falls significantly short of face-to-face contact with prisoners on the wings as well as lacking observations from members doing rota visits.

5.3.2 Staff numbers have been severely affected throughout the reporting year by self-isolation due to infection; for vulnerable staff that have had to avoid contact and therefore could not enter the prison; and those caring for vulnerable dependants. This is in addition to normal reductions in staff numbers through long term sickness, maternity leave, or restricted duties. 1,332 working days were lost in the year due to COVID-19, with peaks in October and December 2020. In October 2020, there was an outbreak that resulted in over 90 staff either testing positive or self-isolating, leaving the prison well below the level needed to deliver the regime that had been operating, resulting in cancelled visits and reduced association for prisoners. A number of detached duty officers from other prisons helped to make up the immediate shortfall.

5.3.3 Recruitment continued throughout the year with newly trained officers arriving. In October 2020, 'Unlocked graduates' arrived following their initial training. Whilst this helped maintain the total number of officers, the Governor reported concerns at the large number of inexperienced officers, many of whom had never encountered a normal regime. Training has been delayed for staff, leaving a significant backlog of officers needing to update or do fresh training.

5.3.4 The key worker scheme depends on the availability of officers to run it and has inevitably not operated as planned throughout the pandemic. Operating the scheme requires a minimum of 72 available officers and the monthly average was below that, so that priority was given to vulnerable prisoners, leaving the majority of prisoners with no key worker interaction.

5.3.5 The prison had not achieved offender management in custody (OMiC) compliance and in March 2021 attempted compliance by completing a 'golden month' of key work. With the arrival of Covid-19, revised criteria for achieving compliance were published for those establishments yet to be signed off. These included that every prisoner should receive one session of key work in a month; priority prisoners should receive one session of key work per week; there should be evidence that resources had been allocated to key work; and that quality assurance processes should be in place.

5.3.6 During the 'golden month' it was decided to use staff on restricted duties to deliver key worker sessions, mainly by telephone. In order to meet the required number of calls the key worker scheme did not function as originally envisaged, with one key worker responsible for regular meetings with a small group of prisoners. However, it did achieve the target of a weekly call to vulnerable prisoners and a monthly call to all prisoners and in some cases exceeded this. Whilst this ensured that every prisoner was able to talk to a key worker on the phone it would usually be a different one each time so that there was not the continuity envisaged by the original scheme.

5.3.7 This method of delivering key worker sessions has continued to be operated since the 'golden month' in March and is expected to continue while Covid-19 results in depleted staffing levels. The Board will monitor the return to the key worker scheme as originally conceived once staffing levels return to normal. Newly recruited officers should have completed key worker training so that there will be increased resources available at that stage.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The reporting year opened with a new equalities officer having been in place for two months; their start had been delayed by Covid-19. Equality meetings were held monthly. Equality representatives on wings were consistent in number and turnover was low until March 2021, when numbers fell primarily due to transfers or the rescinding of privileges.

5.4.2 DIRF boxes are in place on residential wings, but few DIRF forms were submitted (an average of two to three per month). The Board is concerned that DIRFs are not fulfilling their function despite the introduction of the new form in November 2020, and that the normal complaints procedure continues to be used instead.

5.4.3 The prison population is diverse; around one third of the men are foreign nationals from a wide range of countries. To facilitate communication with prisoners, language badges are worn voluntarily by staff indicating which languages are spoken. Statistics show that in July 2020, staff spoke 35 languages between them. A new initiative was introduced in August 2020 to encourage prisoners to display a flag on their cell doors indicating the languages spoken.

5.4.4 Three prisoners have openly identified as gay over the reporting year. The Board is concerned that statistics are not representative of the prison community. Significant work needs to be undertaken in this area to capture data from prisoners. There are plans for a new induction programme to take place in the FNC where information will be captured and placed on P-NOMIS. One of the major challenges for prison inclusivity is to make the environment more accepting for prisoners to be open about their sexuality. The prison has used a number of initiatives, including a 'Let's Talk' event in February 2021 focused on LGBTI+ issues, a LGBTI+ mentoring scheme, LGBTI+ flag badges for staff to wear voluntarily and LGBTI+ posters in the induction room.

5.4.5 As noted above (4.4.2), the prison housed two transgender prisoners in the reporting year in the FNC, away from the general population. Access to hormone therapy proved difficult. The prison does not sell female canteen items, so these were provided through different means.

5.4.6 Covid-19 restrictions have meant lack of group forum meetings for support groups. At the time of publication, the aim was to restart meetings including those for the foreign national group and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller prisoners.

5.4.7 Distraction packs for elderly prisoners were reported as being helpful during the lockdown period. Five were distributed during this reporting year. 'Let's Talk' events in August 2020 focused on race equality. Events around Black History Month were held in October 2020. Big button telephones were ordered to be swapped into cells for those prisoners with special needs.

5.4.8 March 2021 saw the introduction of a coaching programme for black, Asian and minority ethnic staff in Bands 2 to 4 designed to support their professional and personal development. A governor and SMT diversity champions have met regularly with Racial Equality and Striving for Inclusion (RISE) representatives.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

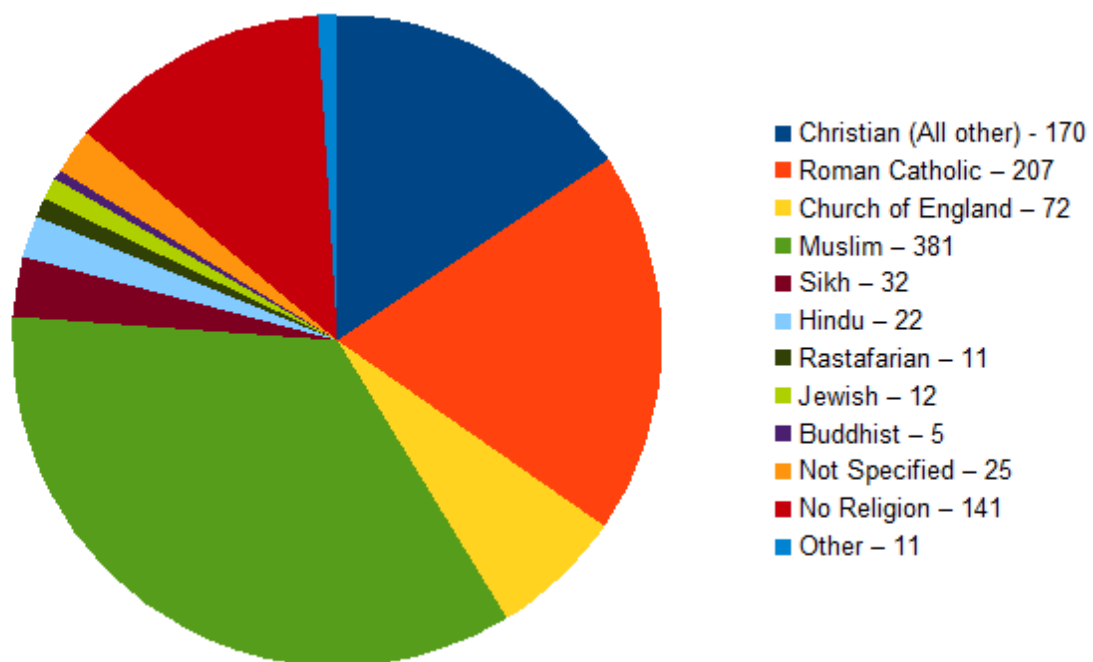
5.5.1 The chaplaincy has continued to do excellent work this year. At the height of the pandemic, every prisoner was visited on a daily basis to assess their needs, and given help and support as needed. Religious material is given out weekly to prisoners of all faiths, and there is a weekly programme on WayOut TV from chaplaincy HQ. A prisoner can also make a request at any time to have an additional visit from the chaplaincy.

5.5.2 There are faith focus groups on each wing, and all wings have multi-faith representatives. Religious festivals and other significant dates are sent to staff and prisoners every month. For those official festival days which are recognised by the prison service, prisoners and staff following that particular faith are entitled to a day off from work and receive extra food.

5.5.3 There are many outside organisations which the chaplaincy employs to help and support the prisoners. The chaplaincy has received many donations of religious material through their work in the wider community with different faiths, and this has been invaluable in ensuring they have sufficient materials to meet the needs of the prisoners.

5.5.4 Due to Covid-19, the 120 volunteers from many different organisations who usually visit the prisoners have been prevented from visiting the prison this past year, unless their visit was essential.

5.5.5 The following pie chart, prepared in May 2021, demonstrates the diversity of faiths within the prison.



5.6 Incentives schemes

5.6.1 A new incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme was developed in the prison and had been due for implementation in early 2020. But in January 2020 a new national framework for IEPs was launched and the scheme was therefore suspended. Owing to Covid-19 restrictions during the reporting year, it has not since been introduced.

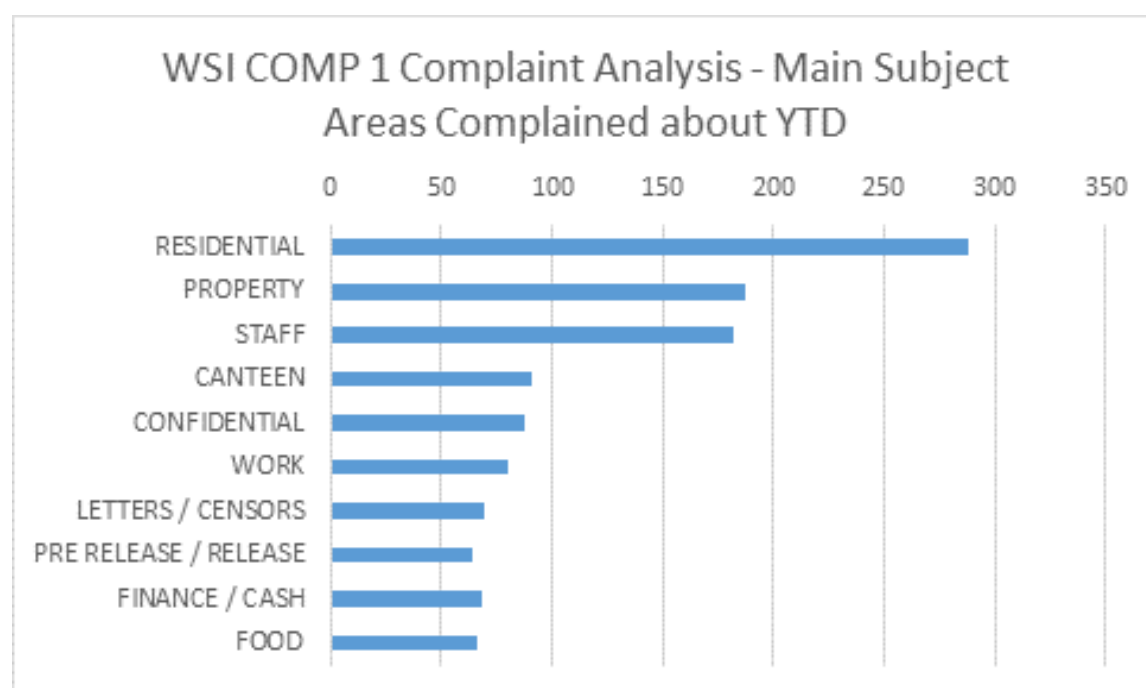
5.6.2 During Covid-19, enhanced incentives could not function as normal because education and/or employment, evening association and some other privileges were not available for much of the year. Guidance to prisons was that basic incentives should only be used for short periods, not exceeding three days, as prisoners were already living with restrictions. The great majority of prisoners were on enhanced incentives during the year.

5.6.3 Unfortunately, owing to non-availability of staff, only limited information about IEPs has been provided to the Board for this report.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 There were a total of 1,722 internal complaints submitted in the reporting year (see graph below). This figure was lower than the previous reporting year (where the total was 2,547).

5.7.2 Comp1 is the initial complaint form filled in by a prisoner to notify the prison of their concern. Over the reporting year, 25 Comp1 subject areas were captured and recorded monthly and of these, 10 key complaint subject areas were repeat areas for the establishment. The top four were residential (303), property (193), staff (190) and canteen (99), as illustrated by the graph below.



5.7.3 Over the reporting year, the Board raised concerns about the efficacy of the complaints system. In January 2021, it was felt there were delays in processing and following up complaints. In March 2021, the Board concluded that the system was in a critical situation, with poor quality of response despite a new system of quality assurance put in place in the previous reporting year. The prison acknowledged failings, although it was hoped that the appointment of new management and leadership introduced would make change possible. There are plans to communicate with staff and prisoners to get feedback on how to improve and update the process, for example by monthly analysis of the top four complaint subject areas.

5.7.4 Ethnicity data showed that B9 prisoners (black/black British – any other background) and W1 prisoners (white: English/Welsh/Northern Irish/British) submitted the most complaints over the reporting year. Statistics collected are used by the equality and protected characteristic leads to establish emerging trends. The prison resumed quality assurance towards the end of the reporting year with approximately 10-15% of weekly complaint responses assessed by staff. A late response list for received complaints was reintroduced as the initial introduction in

the last reporting year had not been carried through. For the reporting year, the average of Comp1 late responses was approximately 35%. One reason given for the backlog of overdue complaints was the accumulation of complaint forms due to self-isolation by staff owing to Covid-19.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 From January 2021 until the end of the reporting year, property formed one of the top four subject areas within the prison's internal complaints system.

5.8.2 Although the prison's handling of prisoners' property has improved over the reporting year, the Board continues to receive regular property-related applications from prisoners which highlight weaknesses in the current system. In November 2020, for example, the Board received an application from a prisoner whose property had seemingly gone missing during his transfer from another London prison. Following enquiries made by a Board member, it transpired that the property had in fact arrived together with the prisoner eight months previously and had even been logged on the prisoner's property card, but that a communication failure had prevented it from being delivered to him.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 Practice Plus Commissioning Group (PPG) is the provider of primary care services, pharmacy and primary mental health care within the prison. Other health services are subcontracted; mental health services are provided by Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Foundation Trust and by Forward Trust, which delivers psychosocial support for prisoners with substance use needs.

6.1.2 PPG has made some internal changes to its management structure in the prison this year and welcomed a new head of healthcare in April 2021. (The Board is pleased to note that a new post has been agreed with NHS England for a modern matron to commence her position in July 2021.)

6.1.3 As has been made clear in the report's overview, this reporting year has, like last year, been exceptional as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and its wide-reaching consequences. The challenges presented by Covid-19 have inevitably affected and disrupted the management of healthcare and in turn the continuity of data and meaningful trends or analyses.

6.1.4 The prison generally, and healthcare in particular, have responded well to the very difficult and challenging circumstances forced on them by the pandemic. The Board does not underestimate the strain on both staff and prisoners in responding to these demands. There is little doubt about the efficacy of the measures put in place to minimise infection and hospitalisation: the prison had no Covid-19 deaths or even very serious illness throughout this period. The effort and determination involved is to their credit. Further comment on the measures is provided below (6.6).

6.1.5 In last year's report, the Board called for improvement in the health complaints system; in particular as to ease of access and timeliness of responses. It has not been possible during the period of the pandemic to gauge whether there has been any progress. This will be kept under review. The data on numbers of complaints about clinical care show a significant reduction, however (from 25 in the first quarter to seven, two, and zero in the second quarter, third quarter and fourth quarter, respectively), which is encouraging. Complaints about the prescription of medication are once again one of the highest categories, although there is a reduction here too from 18 in the first quarter to seven in fourth quarter.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 No data are available for waiting times for GP, dental and optician appointments, nor for DNA (did not attend) rates: PPG discontinued the dashboard recording throughout the periods of lockdown. This has not previously been an area of concern for the prison.

6.2.2 The Board raised concerns in last year's report about the number of times that the prison cancelled external hospital appointments. This year the picture is more mixed: in September 2020 the prison cancelled 28% of external appointments because of lack of staff to escort the prisoner. In November 2020 only 10% were cancelled for that reason. In more recent months, possibly due to easing of Covid-19 restrictions, more frequent testing and vaccinations, the picture looks improved overall: for March, April and May 2021, the percentages were 14% (63/9), 7% (44/3) and 16% (38/6) respectively. However, in these last three months an additional 21

appointments were cancelled because the prisoners themselves refused to attend. On very few occasions is the reason for the refusal listed and it would be helpful if this could be recorded as a matter of routine.

6.2.3 In H3 (the in-patient unit), the lead GP holds a weekly clinic to review all referred prisoners and a regular weekly complex meeting to discuss all those currently resident on the unit. Social care assessments are normally completed on H3 by London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham adult social care team, but these have not taken place during the pandemic.

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 The extended periods of lockdown and isolation have been challenging for staff to manage effectively. The mental health team has seen a substantial increase in the number of referrals during the period of this report. From May 2020 to December 2020 there was a significant increase every month, doubling in some months. It is only in January and February 2021 that there has been a slight decrease in the numbers compared with the same months last year. This substantial increase may well be related to the prolonged cellular confinement during lockdown, but it is also interesting to note that the prison reports that many more men with mental health problems are arriving at the prison and referrals are being identified during very early days of custody. The acuity in presentation has also been markedly higher than the previous year. As a consequence of this increase, the target of seeing routine referrals within five working days has been missed and there is currently a four-week waiting list. This is obviously worrying but not confined to this prison – this is also a feature within the community where mental health provision remains a concern more generally. However, all emergency and urgent referrals have been seen within the recommended timeframe (24 hours and 48 hours, respectively).

6.3.2 Given Covid-19 restraints, the mental health team worked well with prison staff to continue a restricted but productive range of support. There has been continued face-to-face support where practicable and widespread use of in-cell telephones for those who have felt particularly isolated. A CPN consistently attends segregation rounds with the GP twice a week and the duty CPN is available to attend the segregation unit on the remaining days to provide support when requested. Weekly ACCT reviews have input from the CPN.

6.3.3 Whilst staffing is stable, it is disappointing that the learning disability nurse has left; there is currently no specialist provision for this client group.

6.3.4 The Seacole centre, the primary space for therapeutic assessment and intervention, was closed at the start of the first national lockdown and no group work was possible during this time. The service has had to see patients on a one-to-one basis only in line with local zoning policies but has ensured that everyone has been seen at least once in every 10 days. The occupational therapy (OT) team has been restructured to try to respond to patients more effectively. They make use of the in-cell phones and have the equivalent of 1.5 staff members on H3 to better support patients and to continue with their standardised assessments. OT also manage the outside contractor providing gamelan music sessions which have now recommenced.

6.3.5 A key concern for the Board in terms of therapeutic intervention is the absence currently of any psychology service in the prison. The head of the service and her

deputy both left within a short time of each other and whilst we understand that recruitment is under way, this has inevitably left a huge gap – and a critical one – given the mental health needs of such a vulnerable group. The waiting list is of course lengthy. The Board intends to monitor this situation carefully.

6.3.6 As has been noted in previous reports, there are delays in getting prisoners transferred to appropriate mental health hospital facilities within the timeframe recommended by the NHS. This continues and is not a problem confined to Wormwood Scrubs. NHS England has appointed a commissioner specifically to support such transfers; weekly multidisciplinary meetings are held with NHS England to review delays in assessments and decisions to admit to other facilities. The Board can monitor the effectiveness of this going forward. Notwithstanding the delays, more men have been transferred to mental health facilities this year than last year, another indication of the increase in seriously unwell prisoners.

6.4 Exercise, regime

6.4.1 The amount of time that prisoners spent in their cell was already a cause for concern before the pandemic, as noted in the last annual report. The picture has inevitably worsened in the meantime. Almost all prisoners have, however, had daily access to a shower, phone call and time in fresh air every day, albeit for as little as 30 minutes per day. An exception has been a few long-term lodgers in the FNC, who have not had access to fresh air at all.

6.4.2 In a recent development, one half of one landing on A wing, which had been separated off in order to isolate prisoners who had tested positive for Covid-19, has now been given over to prisoners with enhanced IEP status, who enjoy a much more relaxed regime, with several hours out of cell each day. The Board hopes it may be possible to extend this practice to other wings.

6.4.3 For much of the reporting period, the gym has been inaccessible. The recent reopening, though limited, is welcome.

6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.5.1 The Forward Trust has also had to rethink how it could best support its clients during the Covid-19 restrictions. It has provided information about the range of remote measures it has used: in-cell packs and distraction packs were developed and handed to prison staff for distribution; staff made use of the in-cell telephones to keep contact; and separate release packs were prepared if they could not meet a prisoner prior to his release. Wherever possible however, and provided it was safe to do so, staff continued to meet with vulnerable prisoners on a one to one basis and are confident that every client on their caseload had received support in some form or other.

6.6 Dealing with Covid-19

6.6.1 Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Wormwood Scrubs has recorded 387 positive Covid tests. There have been no deaths or seriously ill prisoners due to the virus, which is commendable. The prison has managed the outbreak very well and used a range of effective measures.

6.6.2 The testing regime has been very successful. In reception all prisoners are tested at day zero and day five using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

Thereafter any prisoner showing symptoms of Covid-19 is similarly tested using a PCR test. In addition, during the latter part of 2020 the prison established a partnership with London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to introduce mass testing using lateral flow tests (LFT), which has enabled the prison to undertake weekly mass testing of all prisoners, and to introduce accessible LFT facilities for all staff. This concerted effort has resulted in no positive test being recorded since 17 February 2021 to the end of the reporting period.

6.6.3 Now that the prison is opening up the regime in line with national guidelines, regular testing remains crucial. Prisoners are still routinely tested before going to any off-wing activities or to the gym, and testing generally is in the order of 500 prisoners each week.

6.6.4 The roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme is progressing in line with national guidelines although the uptake has been lower than healthcare would want. The team is actively engaged in establishing the reasons for this in an effort to increase vaccinations.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 At the start of the pandemic, in line with national restrictions, most accredited learning was paused. Those that had already enrolled on education courses such as English, mathematics, IT or barista had immediate access to in-cell learning packs. Unfortunately, not enough prisoners engaged with the packs so new pay rates and incentive schemes were introduced.

7.1.2 Managers have responded to prisoners' feedback from the first lockdown to adjust the curriculum to extend the length of the barista and railtrack courses, and a small number of prisoners were able to achieve an accredited health and safety qualification. The Shannon Trust continues to be very helpful, coordinating and supporting those prisoners who can read to teach those that cannot.

7.1.3 In February 2021, a sequence tracker was set up bringing together education, the activity hub and information, advice and guidance for careers (IAG), with a move towards more blended learning. There is a hope that English and maths will be taken out to workshops to increase accredited learning especially for those who find the sessions too long. Morning sessions are currently three hours long and afternoon sessions two and a half hours long.

7.1.4 The 'Escape' opened in April 2021, offering a much-improved café to staff at Wormwood Scrubs. There is a rolling programme of training for 12 prisoners who gain a qualification which will enable them to gain employment on release. The menu in the 'Escape' is varied and healthy, and the staff working there have all been trained to give excellent customer service.

7.1.5 There was a virtual Ofsted inspection on 2 and 3 March 2021, with HMIP postponing their parallel inspection to June 2021. At the beginning of lockdown, the library closed. However, the prison very quickly put in place a library book loan system where men could request books to be brought to the cell door.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 Because of the continuing pandemic, work and vocational training activities have been severely limited throughout the year. At the start of the reporting year, only essential work activities were operating: the kitchen and laundry remained open, but other workshops such as textiles and gardening were closed, and the prison had no plans to reopen them.

7.2.2 At some times during the year, there were ad hoc work opportunities with limited numbers of prisoners, but most routine workshops did not open. By September, the prison had begun to plan for a move to a Stage 2 regime, which would have included work, but unfortunately further outbreaks took hold and any such plans had to be cancelled.

7.2.3 In February, the prison's records (prepared for a monitoring visit by Ofsted) showed that 251 prisoners were involved in a paid work activity. The majority of pay for work activities was replaced by an equivalent of the furlough scheme that operated in the community.

7.2.4 Although most work and training activities could not take place, the prison updated its policy documents on allocating prisoners to activities and rates of pay.

This included a reward and recognition scheme allowing for bonuses of up to £10. On the whole, bonus payments were made for completing courses and work in waste management, and were typically at lower levels such as £3.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 With the restrictions of the pandemic this has been a very difficult period for face-to-face interviews. Services available to prisoners have undoubtedly been compromised. Cells have telephones but interaction with agencies has been significantly reduced.

7.3.2 Despite secure and stable accommodation being the cornerstone for long-term resettlement into the community, over a third of prisoners left the prison during the period with no fixed abode. This included one prisoner released in error in early 2021. This is despite the government's rough sleeping and homeless policy changes during lockdown. Data on the number of prisoners released into special Covid-19 provided accommodation was not available.

7.3.3 Under the homeless prevention taskforce (HPT), temporary accommodation was made available for all 'no fixed abode' prisoners being released on licence. This accommodation was for up to 56 days and included move on support into more long-term housing. The HPT scheme was implemented twice and covered a period of six to eight months during the height of the pandemic.

7.3.4 St Mungo's, based in the prison, were the main housing advisors. Full operational services were maintained during lockdown with staff operating in bubbles. An on-site presence was maintained. Assessments with clients were conducted using in-cell phones, and paperwork was sent and received via internal mail and wing officers.

7.3.5 A prison release protocol was established with the local borough (Hammersmith and Fulham) to ensure that all those being released who tested positive and/or were considered a close contact for self-isolation were released to temporary accommodation. This protocol was eventually rolled out to other London boroughs for implementation.

7.3.6 The completion of offender assessment system (OASys) assessments, a key element of a prisoner's progression plan to assess risk and prevent re-offending, was significantly affected by Covid-19 restrictions. Assessments were not carried out face-to-face and data on overall OASys completion performance was not available. Officers indicated that completion rates were the lowest of any prison in London.

7.3.7 The CRC was able to carry out face-to-face visits and visit prisoners on the wings apart from in June 2020 when visiting was prohibited. Over 90% of allocated basic custody screening tool assessments were completed. Additional programmes were run by the CRC throughout the year (with the exception of June 2020) covering:

- education, employment, and training
- finance, benefit, and debt
- mindset and offending triggers
- future employment and sourcing training

7.3.8 The prison work coaches through Jobcentre Plus were absent from the prison and remain so, with no available data to evaluate outcomes or levels of interaction with prisoners.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 This is an area of prison life which has been greatly impacted by Covid-19. Following the government guidelines all social visits to prisoners stopped in April 2020.

7.4.2 In an attempt to mitigate the worst aspects of this lack of contact, the prison completed their programme of installing in-cell telephony, and prisoners were given additional credits on their phones.

7.4.3 In the time when there were no social visits the prison used the opportunity to refurbish the visits hall, and in August 2020 visits were re-opened in a Covid-19 safe way. Initially, children were not permitted to visit as there was a no contact rule. This was later relaxed, but then social visits had to close again in November 2020 due to the second/third wave of the pandemic. Social visits had not recommenced at the end of this reporting year. The prison introduced Purple Visits, a video conferencing service for prisoners and their families. This commenced in July 2020 and has been continuing since then without a break, although with occasional reductions in availability.

7.4.4 A number of other family contact interventions were also affected during this Covid-19 year. Story Book Dads, who had arranged for discs of fathers reading books to be delivered to their children, stopped at the start of the pandemic and had restarted by the end of the reporting period. The Parents on the Ball programme was also not functioning. Making it Up had provided in-cell packs for prisoners to make story books for their children. This was very successful, but the courses which they used to run in the prison had not resumed by the end of the reporting period.

The work of the IMB

The complement of the Board has been reduced, from 24 to 16. The Board has 18 members at present, which means it will not be able to replace anyone who leaves. This reduction in complement is considered by the Board to be a constraint on the scope of the Board's monitoring.

The Board managed to train its new members virtually this year, and with the help of some online training. The Board did not meet in person at all during this reporting year – only on Zoom.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	18
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	18
Total number of visits to the establishment	12
Total number of segregation reviews attended (all attended remotely by phone)	36

Applications to the IMB

All applications to the IMB between 1 June 2020 and 31 May 2021

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	7	19
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	11
C	Equality	0	6
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	10	18
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	8	9
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	7	13
F	Food and kitchens	11	22
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	68	43
H1	Property within this establishment	27	13
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	32	14
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	11	2
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	32	14
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	79	45
K	Transfers	13	6
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	37	45
	Total number of applications	345	280



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