



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

**For reporting year  
1 October 2021 – 30 September 2022**

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 2.1 HMP Dartmoor is a category C training prison for up to 640 adult male prisoners.
- 2.2 The prison is situated in Princetown on the western edge of Dartmoor National Park, eight miles from Tavistock and 16 miles from Plymouth (the nearest mainline railway station). Access is difficult with very limited public transport. The local environment is harsh and can be particularly bleak in the winter months.
- 2.3 The prison comprises six residential wings (known in HMP Dartmoor as tors), a care and separation unit (CSU), healthcare suite, chapel, education facilities and workshops. In addition, there is a large gymnasium, a well-equipped kitchen, a laundry and other facilities to support the life of the prison. A fully integrated smoke-free regime is in operation: all wings are integrated and accommodate main and vulnerable prisoners or offenders who have committed crimes of a sexual nature in single cells. The prison and prisoners are supported by contractors and charities, either working in the prison or visiting on a regular basis.
- 2.4 The buildings are leased from the Duchy of Cornwall and the Prison Service is responsible for their upkeep. In December 2021 it was announced that the lease had been extended for at least another 10 years.
- 2.5 Most of the buildings in the prison are old but kept clean, built of granite and prone to damp. There are very well-maintained and attractive garden areas. The prison is one of the major employers in the area, alongside agriculture, tourism and a brewery.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

3.1.1 Three overriding themes run throughout this report and our reporting year to end September 2022. These themes have had such a major impact on all aspects of the prison and prisoner experience that we draw them out here. Firstly, the lack of recovery from the impact and demoralisation of the protracted threat of closure and the consequential uncertainties and lack of investment; secondly a lack of management stability and fully functioning senior leadership team (SLT) at HMP Dartmoor; and finally, the continuing impact of the slow recovery from Covid restrictions.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

3.2.1 Since the last annual report there have been three major issues of concern to the Board:

##### **Impact of uncertainty over closure and underinvestment**

3.2.2 In our report last year we commented that:

‘The closure notice and the current lack of clarity on how it is to be implemented have led to a situation in HMP Dartmoor that is now impacting negatively on many sections of prison life’.

We commented on the lack of investment leading to the prisoner experience being seriously below Board expectations, and that the uncertainties for staff had impacted on morale and retention, which were also impacting on the prisoner experience.

3.2.3 In December 2021 the decision was taken that Dartmoor should stay open for at least 10 years. Clearly this was welcomed by staff and removed the uncertainties about their positions. But by then there was considerable underinvestment in the prison with new investments, like in-cell telephony, funding of new activities, new showers, laundry repairs and repairs to the building infrastructure, all put on hold or much reduced. There were significant gaps in staffing at many levels of the organisation. The prisoner experience was clearly lagging behind what in our opinion is acceptable and what many arriving at Dartmoor were telling us they had already experienced in other prisons.

3.2.4 Disappointingly, following the decision taken to stay open, the expected and essential catch-up investment has not taken place. Of particular concern is the lack of any attempt visible to the IMB to achieve the same basic standards for prisoners as we are told are achieved at other prisons. To give several examples, restricted budgets are impacting on Dartmoor’s ability to begin to achieve adequate employment and rehabilitation activities, and delays to other vital investments – including in-cell telephony, updates to body-worn cameras, refitting and reopening the central laundry, and for a working television system – have severely reduced the prisoner experience below a level the Board considers acceptable or that is available at other prisons. Walking round the prison in rain demonstrates a further example of underinvestment and indeed poses a health and safety risk, in that there are many

buckets to catch drips and much pooling water, which makes for slippery floors and a poor prisoner – and staff – experience.

3.2.5 Staffing has also been a major issue with concerns about profiled staff numbers, the predictably high number of bed watches given the prisoner age profile and the impact that taking officers to staff these has on the regime for the rest of the prisoners. For many months restrictions, often up to 23-hour lockups, remained the norm, which is in the Board's judgement unacceptable.

### **Management and SLT stability**

3.2.6 We commented last year on 'an environment where there has been a change of Governor following retirement, and a striking lack of continuity in the senior management team and wing management following retirement, other absences, and a number of acting-up positions'.

3.2.7 During most of the reporting year this position has hardly improved. There has been a single Governor throughout the period, who has worked hard and effectively with the limited resources that HMPPS has made available to him. There was no permanent deputy governor in post for much of the year, the head of business assurance left and has only recently been replaced and there was a lack of stability at supervising officer and custodial manager grades. There were many new junior wing staff towards the end of the year, but Board members were frequently told by these wing staff that they did not feel they had a relationship with their manager or could discuss issues with them. By the end of the year, some experienced staff were already being taken away on detached duty to other establishments, reducing Dartmoor staffing levels once more.

3.2.8 In this environment it was in our judgement almost impossible for the senior leadership team to coalesce and keep a consistent focus and direction on prisoner wellbeing and rehabilitation. For example, three separate heads of residence ran prison council meetings, but there was little continuity or progression.

### **Slow recovery from Covid restrictions**

3.2.9 Prison Covid restriction measures were beginning to relax at the start of our reporting year, although this relaxation was put on hold for several months following an outbreak in 2021. The restrictions then started to relax again and are now removed completely. The Board is pleased to report that these measures, coupled with the commitment and hard work of management and officers, have been successful for Dartmoor in limiting Covid-19 infections.

3.2.10 However, particularly in the early half of the reporting year, the very slow relaxation of Covid-19 measures had unfortunate consequences for prisoners and staff alike. For prisoners, there have been extensive lockup times and restrictions on activities, which have had their own, largely detrimental, impact on prisoners and their wellbeing, as highlighted in the rest of this report. For staff, there have been the stresses and difficulties of coping with the prison environment during the pandemic, alongside concerns about the safety of their families, and all in the context of needing to cope with a frequently changing management team, a lack of stability

among wing management positions and an influx of new, relatively inexperienced junior staff.

3.2.11 Of particular concern to the Board this year has been the very slow recovery towards normal regime since Covid restrictions were removed. Positively, education class sizes returned to the classroom capacity of eight as soon as it was permitted. However, industry numbers have been held back by staffing vacancies, sickness and a lack of working machinery. It is only very recently that increased wing staff numbers have begun to permit a reduction of extensive lockup times for prisoners to anywhere near the pre-Covid levels. Key working, which provides vital support to prisoners, has at best only restarted in a minimal way for a few prisoners. Important on-wing association activities at weekends, such as pool or table tennis, have only recently begun to re-emerge and at the end of the reporting year were still not available on all wings.

3.2.12 It is in the Board's view essential that the prison now rapidly re-establishes a more supportive and rehabilitative prisoner experience, as in existence prior to the Covid restrictions. It is the Board's view that the prison was not fulfilling its core role as a category C training prison at the end of this reporting year. It is hoped that the Governor with his new senior leadership team will restore this role in the coming year.

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

3.2.13 We find that although the prison is generally a safe place in absolute terms, it is significantly less safe than last year, a view generally supported by the many prisoners we have spoken to throughout the year. We are being told of more incidents of prisoner-on-prisoner bullying, prisoners with offences of a sexual nature feeling unsafe and older prisoners being threatened.

3.2.14 We note that with many experienced officers leaving the service the newer officers do not have more experienced colleagues to learn from day to day on subjects as diverse as de-escalation and standard processes. The lack of reliable body-worn video cameras (BWVCs) at Dartmoor has a significant impact on neither being able to monitor the safety of the environment, nor to monitor the fairness to prisoners and staff of how incidents are dealt with. The absence of footage also reduced the opportunities for officer training on subjects such as de-escalation.

3.2.15 Overall, the lack of capital investment over recent years continues to raise several safety issues for prisoners and staff alike, including, for example, stretched staffing levels, ineffective BWVC and the lack of enhanced gate security on entry, all of which have been reported in previous years. The prison remains relatively safe but there is still considerable scope for safety to be improved,

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

3.2.16 The Board is required to make a judgement on whether prisoners have been treated fairly and humanely during the year. Taken across the year, the only judgement that the Board can make is that prisoners have been treated neither fairly nor humanely, despite the best endeavours of most staff. This is not a judgement the Board reaches lightly. This is also not a criticism of local prison management or any staff members or contractors who work at Dartmoor. They work hard, relentlessly

and flexibly within an unsatisfactory set of circumstances and constraints. The report also raises some concerning issues about how equality and diversity are addressed within the prison.

3.2.17 The length of time that prisoners have been locked up in their cells, and the reduced access to activities/education, family communications, showers and association across the year cannot be considered by the Board to be other than inhumane. At the very end of the year, the situation appears to be improving, However, within this reporting year our judgement must be that prisoners have not been treated humanely.

3.2.18 In terms of fairness we must conclude that prisoners have not been treated fairly this year. We have observed a lack of consistency in treatment both across wings and by prisoner cohort, as evidenced in the detailed sections of this report.

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

3.2.19 Based on our monitoring, the Board is of the opinion that for many prisoners the healthcare provision to prisoners is of a good standard and is equivalent to that to be expected in the broader community. It is provided in a professional and timely manner within the existing resources and the contractual agreement. During the review period, the healthcare team has continued to provide good support to prisoners and officers, and operated well with the prison regime, leading in the provision of health advice and operations.

3.2.20 However, the Board is concerned about the treatment of the significant proportion of prisoners with acute and special needs requiring 24/7 care or specialist equipment and care, including those with mobility issues and those requiring end-of-life care. Dartmoor has a significant older population, some of whom require more extensive support and specialist equipment and specialist support. Prisoners with dementia and neurodiversity issues also require consistent and specialist services. Dartmoor does not currently have the capability, capacity or budget to support these prisoners fully.

3.2.21 The physical environment does not allow for wheelchair access to cells or the provision of some specialist beds and other equipment. In addition, the healthcare contract does not cover 24-hour care, making it difficult to meet the increasing needs of an elderly population. On occasion prisoners who are medically fit to return to prison from hospital must be retained, sometimes for considerable periods, because of the lack of facilities at Dartmoor, with the associated pressure on bed watches, staff not available within the prison and the consequent impact on regimes. There is a serious practical difficulty in supporting prisoners when near end of life or with chronic or social conditions requiring night-time care.

3.2.22 In summary, the systems, processes and environment at the prison are not conducive to supporting these prisoners fully and there appears to be, in the absence of a national older persons' strategy, no planning to deal with this situation in the short or medium term.



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

3.2.23 Dartmoor is not designated a resettlement prison but has continued to release 197 prisoners in the last reporting year. Staff try hard to give prisoners adequate preparation for release and there have been many successful initiatives during the year which we commend, including for example resettlement boards and a new employment hub. We remain concerned though that some prisoners are being released back into very temporary accommodation, with only limited support being offered.

3.2.24 The Board is of the opinion that it would be better if prisoners due for release were transferred in adequate time to a resettlement prison where they can be given the full resources and advice that HMP Dartmoor is unable to provide, primarily because it is not funded adequately to provide the courses and support necessary to ensure successful resettlement. The alternative would be to redesignate Dartmoor and fully resource it as a training and resettlement prison.

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

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

1. What reassurance can the Minister offer that prisoners currently in Dartmoor will not be further harmed or discriminated against, compared with other prisoners elsewhere in the national prison estate, due to a lack of staff and a failure to invest in the infrastructure, security, kitchens, laundry, in-cell telephony, TV systems, new showers and other equipment?
2. HMP Dartmoor still had nine prisoners over tariff and serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) at the end of the reporting year and a further 22 have been subject to IPP recall. What changes are in the pipeline for these individuals? How will their release be achieved and how will they be supported on release, so that they do not endlessly return to prison under recall?

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

3. What specific actions are planned to enable Dartmoor to achieve the same basic standards achieved in most other prisons so that prisoners are not disadvantaged compared to the rest of the estate? Will this include funding next year for in-cell telephony, BWVC, replacement showers on all wings, new TV infrastructure, central laundry facilities, and fixes to damp/leaking buildings?
4. When is the prison going to receive the funding necessary to help return towards fuller prisoner employment and what new activities/industries are planned?
5. If staff reprofiling is scheduled, when is it due to be completed and will the reprofiling recognise the increased bed watches and hospital visits that Dartmoor has due to its prisoner age profile?
6. Will Dartmoor continue both as a category C training prison and one that releases a significant number of prisoners each year? If so, what additional funding will be made available to support the full range of resettlement activities not currently available to stop prisoners being disadvantaged?

7. What steps will the Prison Service take to support the new senior leadership team at Dartmoor by suggesting best practice from other prisons in areas such as resettlement, diversity and inclusion, and the care of prisoners with special needs?
8. Does the Prison Service consider long-term, part-time work as an acceptable long-term solution to prisoner underemployment within Dartmoor, and what guidance is available based on experiences learned elsewhere in implementing this at other prisons?
9. When will the older prisoners strategy be published and what practical assistance and pathways will be provided for Dartmoor prisoners in 2023 because of this?
10. What is the path for Dartmoor prisoners who require 24-hour health or social care support, or other special equipment or support that Dartmoor is unable to provide?
11. Can the Prison Service advise on what HMPPS considers as reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act, in the light of previous experience across the prison estate? What help is available, including funding, to enable Dartmoor to make these adjustments in 2023?

### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

12. With the appointment of the new head of business assurance, will the Governor continue to track and report on the implementation of the recommendations from the IMB, HMIP and other report recommendations?
13. Given the perceived lack of prisoner confidence in discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) and complaints processes (1, 1A and 2), what steps will be taken to strengthen and quality assure them to rebuild confidence?
14. Can the prison explain clearly to staff and prisoners what the purpose is of a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP), how to refer on to it, what the prisoner can expect to get from it and what completion looks like?
15. What can be done to hasten the reopening of the Two Bridges facility to provide for older prisoners and/or prisoners with special needs?

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

**3.4.1 Staffing** - Despite the withdrawal of the closure notice, HMP Dartmoor's location continues to affect staff recruitment and retention, both officer support grades (OSG) and non-operational. We are also being told by management that recruitment in non-operational grades has become problematic. Over the course of the reporting year the Board learnt of difficulties in filling vacancies in the kitchens, industries and health care. This impacts on prisoner welfare as there is reduced prisoner/staff contact.

**3.4.2 Investment** - The Board's monitoring continues to show that a lack of investment in buildings, staff and equipment is resulting in a shortage of work placements for prisoners and increasing their time in cells and on the wing. This has not changed, even as the regime has been relaxed. Recent examples here include the lack of a functioning laundry and essential machines in the carpentry workshop being out of service, both of which have reduced prisoner employment opportunities.

3.4.3 *Regime* - The number of times the prison has been on a restricted red or red/amber regime, meaning prisoners were behind doors in their cells for excessively long periods, especially at weekends, has been a matter of grave concern for the Board. This has been the position through much of the reporting year. The Board commends the current management focus on making and sustaining improvements to these regimes.

3.4.4 *Keyworking* - During the reporting year the lack of key working was again seen to be impacting on prisoners. The Board commends the drive shown by the Governor to see the number and quality of key worker sessions increase.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

4.0.1 A senior governor is responsible for managing and overseeing all aspects of safety. Regular meetings of the safety intervention team (SIMs), safer custody and use of force (UOF) are scheduled, and members of the Board attend on a regular basis to monitor. Meetings are occasionally cancelled at short notice and attendance from staff is often poor, with essential departments not always represented. This is being addressed by the restructuring of senior management and early signs as this reporting year ended are promising.

4.0.2 From the range of quantitative data on all aspects of safety, and with the safer custody team always available to answer questions that may arise, the statistics suggest that Dartmoor continues to be a safe environment, for example, the Safety Diagnostic Tool (analytical tool for safety data including violence) shows that the risk of violence is lower compared with similar establishments.

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

4.1.1 Following the return to normal working after the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, Board members attend inductions for new arrivals on a weekly basis which in their new location provide better interaction between prisoners and IMB members.

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

4.2.1 There were four deaths in custody during the reporting year. The prison maintains a system to action recommendations from these reports. All actions from the inquests are recorded in the HIJ action log and reviewed and updated as part of the internal local quality assurance meetings.

4.2.2 During the course of the year the Board has monitored the number of self-harm incidents, which are lower than last year. For example, 19 were recorded in June and 14 in July. These compare favourably with other prisons in the estate.

4.2.3 Listeners continue to play a vital role in supporting vulnerable men. There is a high demand for their services with 17 calls in June and 20 in July. Currently there are five trained Listeners, which is significantly below the recommended level of 13 (one per 50 men). The training of additional listeners had commenced by the end of our reporting year. A concern this year, and one the Board has raised with the senior management, is that men have occasionally been denied access to a Listener, usually in the evenings and overnight as well as at weekends when the support from a Listener is likely to be most necessary. Key workers should also play an essential component in the safeguarding of vulnerable men.

4.2.4 Prisoners who present safeguarding risks are discussed at weekly SIMs. Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) is the care planning process for prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm. During the reporting period 112 ACCT documents have been opened. Detailed records are presented at the meetings and there is clear evidence of a multidisciplinary approach. Several

men transferred into Dartmoor from other establishments arrive with an open ACCT document. Board members have sampled a small number of ACCT documents and there is evidence of an improvement since last year in the concern we raised about the completion of essential care maps. The ACCT reviews the Board has monitored have been conducted professionally, with a focus upon the needs of the individual.

4.2.5 At the end of the reporting year, two men were on the complex needs pathway. Cases are reviewed at the regular SIMs. Based upon interactions with prisoners on rota visits and through applications received, it is somewhat surprising that more men do not meet the criteria for inclusion.

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

4.3.1 At the end of the reporting period five prisoners were isolating due to not wishing to be in Dartmoor, or not wanting to interact with other men and/or fearing for their personal safety. Members of the Board visit these men as part of rota practice. Regular reviews are conducted at SIMs and the Board is satisfied that the men are treated fairly. It is a concern however that some men spend very lengthy periods in isolation.

4.3.2 Over the course of the reporting year six prisoners have been on challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs). The Board has concerns regarding the monitoring of the men involved. In discussions, it became apparent that some prisoners were unaware of what the plan was aiming to achieve, and few had regular reviews with prison staff. It is not always clear what criteria apply to a CSIP being opened. The safer custody team has indicated that the profile of CSIP needs to be raised and more staff training is necessary.

4.3.3 Members of the Board have identified areas of concern when talking to prisoners. A level of covert bullying which is not reported has been evident this year. As the year has progressed, the Board has increasingly and regularly heard from prisoners of their concerns about bullying between prisoners including by the nature of offence, older prisoners and in one case because of disability. These findings are supported by the excellent work undertaken by the peaceful solutions team (formerly dialog road mapping). Established in June 2022, a group of nine volunteer facilitators across most of the wings, with the senior managing chaplain as the senior point of contact, carry out one-to-one confidential sessions with men who have issues which they feel unable to bring to more formal channels. In addition, the slow progress in key worker rollout denies many of these men the opportunity to talk in confidence to a trusted individual. In August and September 2022, the group carried out 149 individual sessions; bullying, relationships with prisoners, self-harm and substance abuse were some of the key concerns raised.

4.3.4 The analysis of applications received by the Board indicates for the second consecutive year that the highest category is issues relating to staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying (see section 5.3). In total 40 applications were received from 30 men; 14 were allegations of bullying/assault by staff and three alleged prisoner assault.

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

4.4.1 Use of force is monitored through monthly meetings. Based on our monitoring, attendance is often poor, which undermines the importance of the meeting. By the end of July 101 incidents had been recorded, a figure which we understand compares very favourably with the rest of the prison estate. Most occasions when force was necessary were spontaneous and often the catalyst was the serving of meals and tension resulting from access to the limited number of phones on the wings. It is disappointing that progress towards in-cell phones has been delayed as the Board feels this would help in reducing tensions.

4.4.2 All incidents regarding staff involved in multiple UOF incidents are reviewed. In May and June 2022, four staff fell into this category with one officer involved in five incidents. Staff training in this area has, however, been badly hit by regime restrictions and a lack of instructors.

4.4.3 A concern throughout this and the previous reporting years has been the poor quality and obsolescent body-worn video cameras (BWVCs) that remain in use within Dartmoor. There have been significant periods when no cameras were available, because of obsolescent equipment failures. Incidents then went unrecorded, removing important safeguards for both prisoners and staff. Only 5% of incidents were covered with the use of a BWVC in May and 8% in June. The Board regrets that the potential upgrade of BWVCs during the year has been further delayed and will continue to monitor this situation.

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

4.5.1 Substance misuse continues to be a major issue, often resulting in conflict and debt. Many of the men involved spend time in the care and separation unit (CSU) to be protected from debt or to escape a drugs culture.

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

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

5.1.1 The prison has six residential wings, named after local Dartmoor tors (not including the CSU). Using information provided by the operational briefing sheets on sampled dates, the occupancy has ranged between 608 and 635 prisoners, against an operational capacity of 640. In general terms, the accommodation on the residential tors is maintained in a tidy condition, with some wings achieving a particularly high standard of cleanliness. Complaints to the Board about accommodation represent a consistently low proportion (five out of 223 in the current reporting year compared with 10 out of 180 in the previous period). Of these, none have been about a lack of cell furniture.

5.1.2 The number of cells out of use on sampled dates has varied during the reporting year between two and nine, although the Board noted that, perhaps due to the slightly drier winter in 2021-2022, fewer cells were reported to have water ingress through the granite walls than in the previous year. It is significant to note that where cells are taken out of use due to water ingress, they tend to remain so for a period of months rather than days. There is also clear evidence of water damage to plaster on Arch and Granite tors' west-facing elevations. Beyond the cells themselves, rainwater ingress is noticeable in corridors and other covered areas, either by pooling on the floors or the placement of buckets to catch drips.

5.1.3 As noted elsewhere in the report, some of the issues that surround an extended period of lockup may have been significantly alleviated had the introduction of in-cell telephony been carried out as mooted earlier in the year (see section 7.4).

5.1.4 Shower units on the wings differ in number, location and layout but are acknowledged by the prison to be generally old with poor temperature control, and refurbishment is planned. In general, privacy screens or curtains continue to be maintained effectively and prisoner cleaning teams keep shower facilities in generally acceptable condition. However, the general fabric of the shower installations is becoming dated and, in some cases, shabby. In Down tor, the restricted access to the showers prevents the use of privacy doors which, in turn, compromises decency, and the ceiling in Arch tor showers is still flaking and peeling, as noted in last year's report. A programme of shower refurbishments planned to take place during the next reporting year is to be welcomed, although the pre-positioning of a portable shower block in Granite tor exercise yard appears, as at the end September 2022, to lack a planned strategy for safe use and with only external access envisaged through the cold Dartmoor winters.

5.1.5 Members both heard and received several applications concerning systemic failures of the multiple TV systems in various parts of the prison during the periods when out-of-cell time was more seriously restricted. These failures include regularly occurring, multiple lengthy periods of total or partial signal loss across different parts of the prison. There has been, and is still, a continuing frustration that these services

have failed to achieve a degree of reliability on most wings. We are told that the rectification service is contracted in through GFSL, and response times varied, as did the perceived quality of the rectification.

5.1.6 The Board commented last year on the excessive period often required to repair wing-based washing and drying machines, which are used for the prisoners wearing their own clothes (Granite and Arch tors being two examples in the current reporting year), and these issues have continued this year. More fundamentally, the Board notes with concern the shutting down of the main laundry boilers as unsafe this year. This removes much-needed work opportunities from a significant number of prisoners and imposes a time delay on the turnaround of the laundry, including bedding. This has led to several anecdotal reports of the same bedding having to be retained by prisoners for several weeks, due to the non-availability of a sheet exchange. Delays are also reported with the laundering of kitchen whites and their availability for workers in the kitchen. Laundry is now being transported to and from HMP Channings Wood, where we are told what was a same-day turnaround for sheets is now taking three days. The Board considers that this is another example of underinvestment impacting on the prisoner experience.

5.1.7 The Board is pleased to note that the kitchen has managed well throughout this reporting period, including special menu provision for Christmas, Easter and for those adhering to the strictures of Ramadan, despite a reduced kitchen staff for much of the year and some major items of equipment awaiting repair for protracted periods. The quality of meals is regularly observed through rota visits and is generally viewed to be of high quality with good portion sizes. The use of wing-based comment books had been minimal during Covid precautionary measures and has recently picked up again and based on prisoner feedback may now require more regular attention from kitchen managerial staff. The Board has noted that underinvestment has been repeatedly raised by kitchen management during the year, both in the kitchen fabric and for food preparation equipment maintenance. Against this backdrop, the Board notes that repairs have now been completed to various parts of the kitchen, particularly to areas of flooring, and has recently congratulated kitchen management on regaining a five-star hygiene rating from the environmental health inspector. The issues concerning timely repair or replacement of major items of kitchen equipment remain unresolved (including for example an industrial potato tumbler), as they have for at least the last two years.

## **5.2 Segregation**

5.2.1 There are seven cells in the care and separation unit (CSU) and the occupancy is carefully monitored to ensure availability if needed. The average occupancy is three or four prisoners, and a mixture of encouragement and sanction is used to prevent refusals to return to the main wings. Those refusing are put on report and eventually will be referred to the independent adjudicator. Complex cases awaiting transfer are difficult to move on; the longest stay in this reporting year was 119 days, followed by 74 days. During the year the Board has monitored a sample of 42- and 84-day reviews and consider these to be balanced and of good quality.



5.2.2 The CSU has a high turnover of prisoners who are needing to be held briefly following an incident, undergoing a security investigation or confined under the secreted items policy, and these prisoners stay the minimum amount of time before returning to normal location. IMB members are promptly informed of new arrivals, and these are seen by members within 72 hours. IMB members also attend most good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews and some adjudications.

5.2.3 Efforts are made to keep prisoners on ACCTs out of the CSU or to move them out if there is a requirement for this intervention. This reporting year there have been few instances: two weeks in November 2021, one week in April 2022 and three weeks in September 2022, the latter being four residents. All but one of the last four residents are now on normal location and the prisoner still in the CSU is no longer on an ACCT.

5.2.4 Staff in the unit quickly develop relationships with prisoners and this helps maintain order. There have been staff shortages in the whole prison; in July a lot of staff were away during a further outbreak of Covid-19 and CSU staff were concerned that they were always called on to fill the gaps on other wings. The unit has two orderlies who clean and decorate cells. The standard of cleanliness is high.

5.2.5 Of the seven cells in the unit, cell five has caused a lot of problems. It has a different toilet system than the others and must be mended by an outside provider. This year the cell has been out of use for a total of seven months, from the fourth week of November until mid-January and from the end of February until September. The Board is concerned that this has been offline for such considerable lengths of time.

5.2.6 Oversight of the unit is conducted by quarterly segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG) meetings, which are well attended by members of senior management, healthcare and the chaplaincy. Board members also attend to monitor where possible. No serious concerns have been raised by prisoners about their treatment in the CSU during the year and based on the Board's monitoring the Board commends all involved in CSU for the kindness, support and empathy with which prisoners are treated.

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

5.3.1 Applications to the Board under the staff-prisoner relationship heading are the most numerous category and total 40 out of 223 (17.9%). The Board has observed many instances of strong and supportive relationships between prisoners and staff, and the overall nature of the relationships we observe remains positive. However, the Board has also had to raise with management allegations made by prisoners of staff bullying and these have been more than in previous years (see section 4.3).

5.3.2 The Board understands the difficulties that were presented in conducting key work during lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, despite lockdown restrictions being relaxed, very few key work sessions have been carried out this reporting year. This is a matter of strong regret, and the Board notes in discussions with prisoners a cynicism has sometimes crept in about the value of key work, which

management may need to address. The Board supports the prison's strong intention for key work to return with some urgency, so that some 65% of all prisoners have a regular weekly meeting with their assigned key worker, and that these sessions are quality assured by management.

5.3.3 A recent survey by the Board of 50 men across all wings revealed a depressing picture, with most men having no knowledge of having a key worker. There was little evidence of positive one-to-one time resulting in positive or sustained outcomes. The Board considers this to be unfair treatment, removing an important lifeline for support and rehabilitation. The Board will monitor this in the coming months.

## **5.4 Equality and diversity**

5.4.1 The prison's population tracker, as at 5 September 2022, reported 222 prisoners who had self-declared a disability on reception, 17 foreign nationals from 11 nationalities, 34 Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) prisoners, 433 prisoners self-declaring as heterosexual/straight, and 23 declaring as gay or bisexual. With minor variations, these figures have remained broadly constant throughout the reporting year.

5.4.2 The Board reported last year that:

‘monitoring indicates that prison management and staff generally place a high priority on fair treatment and equal access to services for all prisoners. However, this generally high personal commitment from management and officers is not well supported or overseen by management processes’.

We are pleased to note that since then the Governor has identified diversity and inclusion as one of his priority areas to drive improvements.

5.4.3 The Board is disappointed that, despite clear commitment by the leadership team to this area and considerable attention from the Governor, necessary changes have not this year gained traction or begun to be embedded throughout the organisation. Prisoner-led forums have not been fully re-established since Covid restrictions ended, and prisoners tell us that the discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) process lacks prisoner confidence and is ineffective. Older prisoners and prisoners with disabilities are in some areas poorly supported, and there has been no noticeable progress on the consistent support of prisoners with dementia or on the autistic spectrum. The Board recognises that throughout the year the prison has not had a full management team, which may well have made it difficult for management to focus on this area.

5.4.4 The diversity and inclusion action team (DIAT) has met five times in our reporting year (November 21 and January, March, May and July 22). It is now chaired by the Governor, but in the Board's view has achieved little traction across the prison. It is positive that during the year prison staff protected characteristic strand leads have been appointed, as have several prisoner representatives. However, based on our monitoring, attendance at the most recent meetings has been poor, few strand leads are submitting requested position papers in advance (or at all), actions are not effectively driven forward between meetings, and we are of the

opinion that the meetings are currently ineffective as a vehicle for achieving improvements. For example, a simple action agreed some months back to support older and disabled prisoners was the introduction of grab rails. As at the end of our reporting year, none had been installed.

5.4.5 We commend the regular meetings for Black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners that are now established, facilitated by the prison and with prisoner representatives. We also commend the long planned but not yet actioned reinstatement of other regular prisoner-led forums to represent the interests of communities, including those who are over 50, disabled, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller. The Board is disappointed that little progress has been made here during the year, and commends the prison's intention to cascade detailed operational discussions relating to diversity and inclusion to these prisoner forums.

5.4.6 Eleven months into our reporting year, the prison had received 16 DIRFs. Pre-Covid-19 lockdown, a system was introduced where the responses to 100% of these forms were independently quality assured by an external specialist but this was discontinued and has not been in place during our reporting year. A training need for staff in responding to DIRFs was also recognised by the prison pre-Covid but has not yet been completed. Based on our discussions with prisoners there is no confidence in the DIRF system, and it is highly likely that numbers are significantly understated, with prisoners fearing personal come back if they raise issues. We commend recent management intentions to rebuild confidence in an appropriately working and robust DIRF system as a matter of urgency.

5.4.7 In August, we monitored the prison records of responses to the DIRFs above. Three DIRFs had no reply recorded and appeared overdue. Six were upheld with actions recommended, including grab rails and other reasonable adjustments, but it is unclear that there is a system for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. Nor does there appear to be any system akin to an ACCT post-closure review to follow up with the prisoner. It is noted that there were four allegations against named officers, none of which were upheld, with one submitted in October 2021 and replied to in April 2022, concluding that, due to the elapsed length of time, it has been difficult to ascertain exactly what was said.

5.4.8 Based on the Board's monitoring, the DIRF system was, like last year, responded to inconsistently, with frequent poor documentation and no independent quality assurance.

5.4.9 With 222 prisoners with a self-declared disability and 130 prisoners aged over 60 (as at 5 September 2022), a clear understanding of reasonable adjustments for these two cohorts of prisoners is essential. The Board is disappointed that in its judgement our monitoring shows little systemic understanding or planning for the needs of these two cohorts. Actions are at best reactive to individual needs. Longstanding issues – including, for example, wheelchair access restrictions to cells, restricted access caused by steps to some prison areas including education and the chapel, and the lack of 24/7 healthcare with the associated reliance on out-of-hours doctors – all remain and have again been brought to our attention by prisoners during the year. This lack of apparent planning impacts on the welfare of all

prisoners, as unplanned bed watch numbers often reduce wing staffing with subsequent frequent negative impacts on unlock times and regimes for all prisoners.

5.4.10 The Board notes with regret that the positive steps being taken before lockdown, including a new day centre and reviewing the availability of activities for older prisoners in the diversity centre, have not progressed. The Two Bridges centre has not reopened as at the end of the reporting year. On a positive note, on F wing the Foxes Den, an area for the mainly older prisoners on that wing to socialise, has reopened and is well used.

5.4.11 During the year the support available to prisoners with dementia or on the autistic spectrum has been brought to our attention several times. For example, officers tell us of a lack of training in supporting prisoners on the autistic spectrum and with dementia, and a lack of awareness of how they might react to raised voices or other prison officer behaviours. Both conditions require both the specialist training of staff and the benefit of consistency of staffing, which have not, the Board has been told, always been available again this year – the latter sometimes due, for example, to the need to cover for staff absence. Buddies have again told us of prisoners who have dementia inadvertently pushing their way to the front of food queues and being abused. There is an urgent need for training of officers and raised prisoner awareness in these areas.

5.4.12 The Board's judgement based on our monitoring is that the support of diversity and inclusion at HMP Dartmoor is inadequate, a situation recognised by senior management and where urgent change is planned. This is not to say that there are not many instances of officers and governors going out of their way to support individual prisoners, a situation that we frequently see. However, our monitoring showed inadequate systems, poorly followed and managed, with inappropriate behaviours not always challenged and some prisoners scared of raising their concerns.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

5.5.1 Prisoners have, again this year, frequently expressed to the Board their strong appreciation of the faith and pastoral care they have received. This includes the support that they received day to day both during and since the pandemic, and during times of personal or family crisis.

5.5.2 The chaplaincy continues to support prisoner welfare, seeing prisoners regularly. Based on our monitoring we note that the CSU by is visited daily by the chaplaincy, with all new receptions seen within 24 hours of arrival, and a discharge interview completed for all prisoners prior to release.

5.5.3 During our reporting year Covid has again placed major demands on the services provided by the chaplaincy. By October 2021 faith groups had begun to resume in the prison but following a further Covid outbreak at the prison these were suspended again in December 2021. At that time, to ensure that prisoners who would normally attend faith groups continued to receive support, approximately 240 individual faith sheets covering all faith groups were again delivered on a weekly

basis. Since June 2022 all faith groups have restarted with Covid restrictions no longer being in place.

5.5.4 Bereavement and crisis support by the team has also been particularly important both during and since the pandemic. The Board commends the continuation of the use of iPads, enabling live streaming of some funerals. Alongside this, funeral and compassionate in-person visits have resumed. Chapel memorials for individual prisoners have continued throughout the year, as have individual one-to-ones and quiet time. The Living with Loss bereavement course restarted right at the end of our reporting year.

5.5.5 The Official Prison Visitors scheme is managed by the chaplaincy and, following suspension during Covid, resumed on 30 October 2021. It has continued since then through the late 2021 Covid outbreak to the end of our reporting year without break. The Board notes the positive and supportive attitude of visitors we have had discussions with during the year.

5.5.6 The chaplaincy prioritises attending ACCT reviews where either the prisoner requests it, or where there has been significant pastoral input. In addition, a member of the chaplaincy visits all those on an ACCT weekly on the wings. Where we have monitored ACCT reviews, we have noted the empathetic and constructive input of the chaplaincy team to these meetings.

5.5.7 On average, 2.2 full-time-equivalent chaplains are in the prison on any day, as well as providing a 24 hour on call service as duty chaplain. All faith groups are covered based on existing staff. During the year, new appointments, mainly part-time, have been made covering Sikh, Jehovah's Witness, Quaker and other Christian faiths. There is ongoing recruitment for Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Rastafari chaplains.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

5.6.1 As the incentives scheme, together with the basic level, was reintroduced late in the reporting year, it has not been possible to draw any conclusions on its effectiveness in this reporting period. It was noted that East tor was reinstated as an enhanced wing during September 2022 and the Board will be monitoring its effectiveness during the next reporting year.

## **5.7 Complaints**

5.7.1 The Board continues to receive several oral and written applications alleging the loss of complaints submitted through the prison's complaints procedure. Enquiries with the complaints clerk have consistently confirmed the proper recording and tracking of a complaint. However, where the Board has monitored complaint responses, we find that these are inconsistent in detail, both at COMP1 and COMP1A levels. The response quality seems to be determined by the individual responding, with some excellent responses. Other responses seem more limited and would benefit from further quality assurance.

5.7.2 It has been noticeable during the year that the number of confidential access COMP2 complaints to the IMB chair have increased significantly, few of which are true confidential COMP2 subject matters. In discussing this with the prison, this position seems to be replicated across COMP2s to the Governor and COMP2s to the prison regional group director. When discussing inappropriate COMP2s to the IMB with prisoners, we generally ask why the prisoner has used the COMP2 process rather than an IMB application and it is often that they do not understand the process.

5.7.3 The Board notes that management are currently receiving regular analyses of complaints received, and the quality and service levels associated with responses. It is the Board's view that further training of prison staff in responding to and quality assuring complaint responses, and awareness raising of the complaints system among prisoners, would be beneficial and productive.

## **5.8 Property**

5.8.1 The Board was pleased to note a continuing low number of complaints regarding loss of property within the prison (up from six to 11). There were, however, still 19 complaints concerning property lost immediately prior to or in transit to the prison.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

6.1.1 For this reporting year, primary care services at Dartmoor continued to be commissioned from Practice Plus Group, mental healthcare was subcontracted through Devon Partnership Trust, substance misuse services through Exeter Drugs Project and dental services through Time for Teeth. A retendering exercise was carried out during this period with the announcement of the new provider – Oxleas NHS Trust – being made after significant delay in September.

6.1.2 The IMB has no remit to monitor the medical quality of healthcare, as this is a matter for healthcare professionals. We have however monitored the general provision of healthcare through a mixture of rota visits, discussions with prisoners, attendance at the bi-monthly local delivery and quality meetings (chaired by the Governor), attendance at GOoD boards and discussions with management and receipt of management information.

6.1.3 Based on this monitoring, the Board considers that many prisoners view the healthcare provided as equivalent to that in the general population. The Board however has significant concerns about the care provided for the high proportion of older, chronically sick prisoners who have complex needs

6.1.4 Staffing of healthcare has remained problematic. This, we are told, reflects a national difficulty in recruiting nursing staff, as well as the uncertainty arising from the closure notice and the prolonged retendering exercise for NHS services. Based on our monitoring, this has had a direct but very limited impact on patient service levels.

6.1.5 The healthcare team record, monthly, all incidents, concerns and complaints, and the numbers remain relatively low.

6.1.6 Reported patient concerns to the Board remain at a low level, all of which have been dealt with face to face with no escalation outside the department. The key issues related to waiting times for dental, hospital and GP appointments, and delays in processing subject access requests due to the volume of requests and the clinical time needed to review records. We note that applications relating to prescribing decisions by GPs, which of course are not within our remit, and stopping or changing medication after a full medication review of an individual prisoner, are independently monitored by healthcare.

6.1.7 The Board notes that healthcare maintains a risk register which is updated on a bimonthly basis. The top four risks have remained unchanged for most of the year:

- The current level of dental sessions does not meet the needs of the prison population and prisoners are experiencing long delays accessing routine dental treatment.

- Staffing shortages due to the inability to recruit and retain staff, affecting the service and delivery of services to patients.
- If patients are unable to receive social care support over a 24-hour period and when needed, they will not be safe to remain in this establishment and there is a difficulty in moving such patients to establishments which can meet their needs.
- If the patient population continues to include elderly and complex patients, then the cost of escort and bed watches will continue to be over budget month on month.

## **6.2 Physical healthcare**

6.2.1 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has lessened significantly during this reporting period with one outbreak during the year resulting in 50 prisoners contracting the virus. It was quickly contained and concluded. The Board recognises and welcomes that the work of the healthcare team during the pandemic received a commendation from Public Health England which praised both the strategies enacted to prevent transmission and the department's response to the outbreak. The Board notes the subsequent success of the Covid vaccination programme, and the encouragement offered to prisoners to get booster injections as well as flu vaccinations.

6.2.2 Staffing in primary care continues to be problematic. The team comprises a GP, nursing staff, pharmacists, healthcare assistants and a paramedic. A permanent GP was appointed in March which has helped significantly in providing continuity of service to prisoners, particularly those with long-term conditions.

6.2.3 The full complement of staff is 23 full-time equivalents. However, throughout most of this reporting period there have been up to six vacancies including four frontline nurse vacancies. The situation has been made more difficult due to the lack of Practice Plus approved agency staff available in the south west. It was therefore necessary to rely on current staff members working additional hours as bank staff, and to require the healthcare management to undertake clinical roles. The Board believes neither of these actions is satisfactory. We are told that recruitment across all posts has proved difficult due to a national shortage of nursing staff, the continued (but incorrect) perception that Dartmoor is due to close and the uncertainty relating to the retendering exercise. The impact on prisoner experience has been general rather than specific, i.e. slower response time, less continuity of nursing, some clinics being cancelled due to shortage of staff. Overall though, staff are to be commended for sustaining what prisoners tell us is an effective service.

6.2.4 Post-Covid, all services have been reintroduced and the backlogs for opticians and physiotherapy have been significantly reduced and continue to improve. Additional sessions have been requested for podiatry. Dental provision and waiting times continue to be a challenge with waiting times of up to three years. Dental



provision for an additional 33 sessions has been approved, with eight to 10 so far implemented. While accepting that this reflects the situation in the community, nonetheless it remains a concern.

6.2.5 A major area of concern to the Board relates to the support for prisoners with acute and special needs, including Dartmoor's significant older population, some of whom require extended hours of care or 24/7 support. Our concerns also include prisoners requiring specialist support and management, including those with dementia and neurodiversity issues. Dartmoor is not currently equipped to support such prisoners fully with the result that they do not receive the care they would in the community and there is a significant risk of them being treated unfairly or inhumanely. There appears to be no national planning indicating what future numbers of prisoners requiring this support are likely to be or how the Prison Service will support them.

6.2.6 We understand that the Prison Service is developing an older persons strategy – due earlier this year – but that it has been delayed. This is a major concern to the Board. Specific concerns at HMP Dartmoor include the difficulties and delay in putting in place care for prisoners requiring non-working day support for non-emergency situations, e.g. falls from beds and problems with patient support equipment; access to cells not wide enough for wheelchairs; support offered for prisoners with catheters overnight and at weekends; prisoners with increasing issues relating to dementia; the number of complex needs patients and hospital admissions that result in long-term bed watches, due in part to the high number of elderly chronically sick prisoners in Dartmoor's population; and the practical difficulty of supporting prisoners when near end of life or chronic or social conditions require 24-hour care. The physical environment at Dartmoor is not appropriate to care for those patients who require enhanced 24-hour care/social care and it does not meet their needs.

6.2.7 There have been a few incidents where prisoners have been released/transferred without healthcare being informed, resulting in a failure to provide medication to take out. These incidents of untimely communication are being addressed. There have been five incidents where agency staff have been unable to provide enhanced care for a specific prisoner with enhanced needs, due to staff shortages. There have been seven incidents relating to delays in service due to cancelled urgent hospital appointments because of staffing pressures either at the hospital or at the prison. On several occasions, ambulance delays at the hospital have resulted in prisoners returning without treatment. The communication to ensure the presence of a mental health specialist at ACCT reviews, mentioned in last year's report, has improved, though there were still occasions when a review was completed without healthcare input.

6.2.8 The Board is concerned that despite considerable effort by healthcare staff it has not yet been possible to restart a patient forum. The forum is an important element of prisoner feedback and the Board feel it is a priority to ensure that the

prisoner voice is regularly heard. Patient surveys have however been conducted on a bimonthly basis by the healthcare team and indicate positive responses, with over 95% recommending the service and confidence in it above 83%.

6.2.9 Despite additional sessions, dentistry waiting times continue to grow – up to three years in some cases based on current services, although these are planned to increase.

### **6.3 Mental healthcare**

6.3.1 Mental health awareness training for prison officers and training on the impacts of autism are offered by the mental health team in shorter mini packs, but attendance by officers continues to be problematic due to staffing issues.

6.3.2 The increase in mental health issues due to the lockdown and associated regime changes has continued through this reporting year but, despite the challenges, Board monitoring indicates a good performance in completing assessments within the contracted timescales and complying with the timescale for referrals of patients.

6.3.3 The increased incidence of open ACCTs has impacted on mental health staff, and although attendance at initial and caseload ACCT reviews is prioritised due to the high-risk nature of this client group, it is difficult to attend all reviews.

6.3.4 Office accommodation and facilities have been problematic for the mental health team and there are difficulties with appropriate accommodation for group patient interventions, despite efforts made by the prison management to solve this. The Board would urge that a solution to these problems is found as soon as possible to improve the services offered to prisoners.

### **6.4 Social care**

6.4.1 The requirement for social care in the prison has continued to rise with an increased need of hours per person. At the start of the year 13 prisoners were receiving a total of 51 hours per week of social care. During this reporting year this figure rose to 13 people requiring 233.5 hours and, following two deaths and one prisoner going into long term external care, fell back to 10 people requiring 132.5 hours. This increase per person reflects the aging, increasingly debilitated elderly population and causes concern for the future due to the lack of capacity within the healthcare team. The care packages range from support with showers to regular welfare checks.

6.4.2 Buddies provide support and non-intimate care to approximately 30-40 prisoners and their work is highly valued and carried out to a very high standard. However, there have been concerns in the last few months that on Fox tor, during restricted regimes and staff changes, Buddies have not been permitted out of cell for enough time to undertake their full duties, particularly assisting prisoners with complex medical conditions or helping a prisoner achieve adequate hydration. This

has impacted severely on their ability to assist vulnerable, ailing and sick prisoners, leading to considerable frustration and fear from those prisoners who rely on the Buddies' help. The Board reported these problems to the Governor and appropriate instruction was given, but the issue still occurs on occasion. During the year, several experienced Buddies have moved from the prison and training for replacements from Recoop (Resettlement and Care of Older Prisoners) has been restricted but by the end of the reporting year had restarted.

6.4.3 The Board notes with concern that the Two Bridges day centre for older prisoners and those with special needs, which opened in late 2019 and provides important activities for 15-20 prisoners on a rota basis, has remained closed during this year, even though Covid restrictions have been removed.

6.4.4 The lack of staff training and supervision for dealing with and supporting prisoners on the autistic spectrum and with learning difficulties and disabilities, including dementia, directly impacts on the prisoner experience. One prisoner commented, for example, that he was scared by officers shouting at him just because he had not understood what they were telling him. As noted elsewhere, another with dementia drifted unsupervised to the front of the food queue and was met with abuse from prisoners who did not understand his condition. There is a lack of consistency of officers supporting such prisoners, which could be improved with training.

## **6.5 Exercise, regime**

6.5.1 The Board continued to be concerned that, for a significant portion of the reporting year, prisoners complained about the amount of time they were locked up in cell. Whilst the increase from 60 minutes a day out of cell to 90 minutes midway through our reporting year was greeted with relief, the frequency of subsequent red and red/amber states (which we are told is often due to staff availability, particularly at weekends) has impacted negatively on these improvements. The return of a more normal regime, with whole wing unlock, only occurred late in the reporting year, and we are told by management that this normality should now be maintained for the future. However, we note the recent number of officers now working on detached duties and thus reducing their availability to Dartmoor. The Board noted once more that the additional time afforded to prisoners working in, for example, recycling and the kitchens, to shower before taking their meals, although provided for in a notice to prisoners last year, is not uniformly adhered to by officers on the wings. Due to its non-observance, this again became a cause for prisoner complaint as the reporting year ended.

6.5.2 Prisoners have given detailed and credible examples of long periods of lockup on some wings during much of the year, e.g. 48 hours locked up followed by 1½ hours unlock then another 52 hours locked up; 40 hours locked up from 11am Friday to 2pm Sunday.

6.5.3 Prisoners across several wings have also told us within recent months that the time out of cell arrangements are inconsistent and that they believe that regime and cell unlock often depend on which officers are on duty rather than the circumstances or number of officers on the wing at the time. Officers have also highlighted to us that unlocks by wing are also inconsistent and, in their view, not always rotated fairly where there are limited officers available.

6.5.4 F wing has been raised as an issue with us repeatedly towards the end of the year as of particular concern. Some officers (some regular, some covering) have told us that when there are staff resourcing pressures within the prison, the wing's small size and the nature of its prisoners makes it a regular candidate for increased and unfair lockups. Prisoners on F wing have also told us that lockups seem to depend on the officers on duty rather than the number of officers on the wing. Our concerns here have been drawn to the attention of senior prison management.

6.5.5 Prisoners also tell us that during restricted regimes, access to exercise yards and gym are also dependent on the wing and officers on duty. For example, several prisoners have told us that at times they did not get off their wings for a week.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

6.6.1 The integrated substance misuse services (ISMS) team (Exeter Drugs Project) meet all referred clients within five days of referral, review all clients on the caseload within 13 weeks, attend ACCT reviews and complete welfare checks on those found under the influence. The ISMS now engage face to face through the cell door with all receptions within a week of arrival to offer support and intervention for those who chose to engage with the service. Over 260 one-to-one sessions have been held monthly. Peer support groups were reinstated in May. Four ISMS volunteer wing representatives, who act as ambassadors and representatives of the service on their residential wings, have been recruited and the Board welcomes this initiative.

6.6.2 ISMS staff express concern to the Board that they currently continue to practice without having the appropriate 'jailcraft' or ACCT training, which they say puts them and their clients at risk. This would be a major concern to the Board.

6.6.3 The Board notes the concerns of ISMS staff that their clients continue to report to them the significant illicit use of substances, yet reduced reports of official UTI (under the influence) incidents are being received from the prison. As a result, they are concerned that prisoners remain at risk of harm due to not having their care needs reviewed at the time of their illicit use.

6.6.4 Safer custody daily reports identify men who are at heightened risk or considered vulnerable due to recently having some form of medication stopped. Staff are encouraged to monitor these men more closely.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

7.0.1 There have been major changes within the work and activity hub during this reporting year with the resignation of the industries manager in June (the post has now been recruited) and the activity manager, and the appointment of a new learning skills employment manager. Despite also being short of administrators, the Board has found great commitment in providing relevant in-cell learning, as well as distraction packs, before the return of education classes. Also evident is the ongoing emphasis on developing industries, training, education and activities to enable the prisoners to progress and work positively towards successful resettlement. An example of this was the lively job fair where both local and national employers spent a day in the prison and all prisoners had the opportunity to see what was on offer. The Board commends the department for its continuing enthusiasm and determination to provide meaningful activity and attainable goals for the prisoners.

### **7.1 Education, library**

7.1.1 Education courses and library services are provided by Weston College. Our monitoring indicates a robust and proactive accountability procedure in place to manage that Weston College fulfil their contractual obligations. For example, at a summer establishment performance meeting, it was highlighted that Weston College needed to increase its number of in-depth education screenings in relation to the rapid screenings. These screenings identify learning difficulties and thus signpost any areas where extra support is required to enable prisoners to achieve their potential.

7.1.2 The early part of the reporting year was dominated by Covid restrictions, resulting in the continued use of in-cell education packs. By the end of May 2022, however, class numbers had increased from six to the pre-Covid number of eight. At present about 12% of prisoners in HMP Dartmoor are involved in education (not including Open University and distance learning). Both attendance and success within education (90%-94%) compare very favourably with other equivalent prisons and generally across the entire estate. A recent slight decrease in attendance and success is being monitored and possible causes identified. There are 11 courses running, varying from two to five weeks in length, and a part-time ongoing English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) class. The overriding problem currently is not capacity, but rather the need to resolve staffing issues in the context of a building that is likely to need replacing soon.

7.1.3 We are told by staff that capital investment is needed to replace the existing education building which, alongside resourcing, is limiting education provision as maximum class sizes must be restricted to eight rather than the theoretical course maximum for teachers of 10. The building is not accessible by prisoners with mobility issues, which is itself a major concern and potentially does not indicate a reasonable adjustment for disability. In addition, some toilets within the building are no longer usable as the floor is unsafe. The building was also damaged by a vehicle during the year and the damage was such that it had to be structurally surveyed before it could be used again. We are told that the building now needs replacement.

7.1.4 There have been two recent assessments of education services: a Weston College internal assessment and most recently an Ofsted interim visit almost at the end of the reporting period. The latter identified four areas for improvement (including systems to evidence prisoner progress) and an action plan to tackle the identified issues is being worked on. Teaching staff absences throughout the year, and particularly post-Covid, have impacted badly on some maths courses and the virtual campus. The virtual campus has also had technical issues. Recent increased staffing levels (largely administrative and teacher support) should develop the administrative side and help develop good innovative practice in the classroom, which will positively impact on the prisoner's learning experiences.

7.1.5 During the reporting year, courses have been affected by several factors, including Covid restrictions, regime restrictions and education staff shortages. The restricted regimes resulted in courses not being completed on time and exams being postponed with the resulting delay in the start of the next course. However, in the last two months of the reporting year this situation has improved considerably, and courses have not been affected.

7.1.6 The prisoners we have monitored within education report a very good level of support from their teachers, both within their courses and concerning broader prison life. The Board has observed some excellent interactions and it is clear to us that the flexibility of the staff is often much appreciated by the prisoners.

7.1.7 As noted previously in this report, prisoners have complained both to us and to prison management that at the end of the afternoon they do not always get the time necessary to make phone calls or have a shower as they are locked up. This seems to apply particularly to the larger wings and those with few working phones. We commend the steps taken by education staff to alleviate this issue by sometimes allowing the prisoners to leave early, as the alternative might be non-attendance. As one prisoner put it, 'education, or phone and shower – no contest'.

7.1.8 Board monitoring indicates that the move to part-time classes will have benefits but also raises some potential concerns for prisoners. Concerns have been raised about possible implications for prisoner motivation and therefore attainment if a course lasts 10 weeks instead of the present five, as well as an increase in staff workload. Benefits include equal opportunities for both workers and those studying to take part in meaningful activities with equal pay. If education remained full time those studying would earn a lot more than those in part-time work

7.1.9 The library membership in the middle of the reporting year was 524 out of a prison roll at that time of 631 and prisoners spoken to refer generally positively to the services available from the library. On one day the Board visited there were 102 prisoner visits, which would be consistent with most members visiting on average weekly.

7.1.10 During the year the Board identified 15 Open University (OU) students and 22 prisoners following 13 other long-distance courses. In discussion they expressed appreciation for the support and considerable help that the library offers them in facilitating their learning. This included dedicated library time and help to submit the

prisoners' work. OU students have access to the virtual campus, but it appears this is sometimes more problematic for other long-distance course learners. The Board expects this access issue to be improved when a current virtual campus staffing issue is resolved.

7.1.11 The Board is pleased to note that stock has been increased in the Black, Asian and minority ethnic, LGBT and non-English-speaking categories. Prisoners can also this year put in requests for books, magazines and DVDs. There are several groups based in the library including an active reading group and a creative writing group, members of whom took first and second prize in a national *Inside Times* writing competition.

7.1.12 During Covid, the Shannon Trust reading mentors lost prisoners, but by the time of this report's publication more prisoners had been trained, although more will still be required.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

7.2.1 Since the return to pre-Covid conditions all 12 workshops and work areas have reopened. In August there were approximately 371 prisoners involved in work, education or both. There were approximately 201 unemployed prisoners who were able to work although a few did not want to, or only wanted to work in popular areas where there were no vacancies or staff shortages meant vacancies could not be filled in, for example, gardens. Throughout the reporting year the vacancies within industries have varied between 35 and 51 and at the end of September were 41. These vacancies are almost exclusively within the 'non-essential' workforce and so do not include kitchen, recycling or laundry.

7.2.2 Vacancies within the industries are largely, we are told, due to staff shortages reducing capacity. The most affected areas are the garden, polytunnels and textiles. The Board notes that when there are issues in the work areas – at the time of writing, for example, the laundry – the prisoners involved have no alternative work. The Board commends the prisoner decorating working party initiative.

7.2.3 The Board notes with concern the number of prisoners who throughout the reporting year have been neither employed nor in education. A few prisoners report doing nothing for over three years and, although a lot of this is believed to be Covid-related, the prisoners' frustration is evident. This situation was fairly frequently exacerbated by the restricted regimes which resulted in these prisoners being in their cell for large parts of the day. As is not uncommon across the estate, to alleviate this high level of unemployment a system of part-time work has been proposed, and this has already begun in the woodwork workshop. Most work areas will have a core of full-time skilled workers, for example in woodwork those with machine skills and several part-time workers who would be less skilled. Two part-time workers will replace a full-time less skilled role when it becomes available through natural attrition. As the skill level increased and roles became available, the prisoner would move to a full-time role. This is to be run out carefully, so no prisoner loses money because he moves from full-time to part-time work. Carried out throughout the workforce it should enable all prisoners to be employed for at least part of the day

and thus increase fairness. The Braille workshop would be an exception as all workers need to be skilled so that the contracts can be achieved.

7.2.4 The Board notices the progress made towards increasing the qualifications offered within the industries. National vocational qualification levels 1 and 2 are popular with the land-based activities, and employability skills are embedded in workshops, enabling prisoners to develop and demonstrate the soft skills necessary for employment on resettlement. However, some of these important aspects have been affected by staff shortages. The Clink programme, a kitchen accredited training project, is also ongoing and discussions are taking place to increase the number of participants by making the criteria for acceptance on to the programme more closely aligned to the Dartmoor prisoner profile.

7.2.5 The return of the Two Bridges and diversity centres would provide a focus for the older, more vulnerable prisoners. The Board notes an increase in activities for this group of prisoners within the last month of the reporting year with a quilt making, singing and sport session, all thoroughly enjoyed by the prisoners spoken to. However, the Board considers that the older prisoners, particularly on Fox tor, should be more of a priority and would very much welcome a return to Two Bridges or other activities, thus providing a focus for this group of prisoners.

7.2.6 In the Board's discussions with managers in industries it has been highlighted that hindrances to further development are largely related to the continued lack of investment. This is clear in carpentry, for example, where a lack of functioning machinery has limited the number of prisoners who can work and restricted their progression towards employment on release. Another example is the laundry where the boilers are no longer functioning and apparently cannot be repaired. There is difficulty in recruiting appropriate staff, reportedly largely because there are better paid jobs available. Also, there is no pool of staff to call on when there are shortages. On occasions staff are moved from, for example, concrete (non-essential) to recycling (essential), resulting in the closure of the concrete workshop. However, it is hoped that the change to a lot of part-time work will mitigate the effect on the prisoners.

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

7.3.1 Last year the Board was concerned that too many category D prisoners faced a long wait to be transferred to a facility designated as appropriate in their sentence plans. This situation improved substantially during the reporting year but remains an issue which will continue to be monitored.

7.3.2 Changes in the working practices of the offender management unit (OMU) have, the Board is informed, made the caseload of probation workers an issue. The Board continues to receive complaints from prisoners due for release in less than 12 weeks that pre-release courses were difficult to access and limited in numbers. This worries and puts additional stress on to prisoners, who expressed concern to Board members that their release on probation may have been delayed or put in jeopardy. Changes in the OMU management and resourcing will hopefully resolve these issues, although the Board acknowledges that staff recruitment and retention, as in so many other parts of the prison, do present some issues.



## **7.4 Family contact**

7.4.1 Many prisoners have complained to Board members during their rota visits that they have had access to in-cell telephony in their previous prisons but now have insufficient time to both take a shower and make a family phone call, joining a queue for a 10-minute landing PIN phone slot. An additional issue, often reported verbally by prisoners and raised repeatedly with prison management, has been the significant delay in processing PIN phone authorisation requests, usually attributable, we are told, to staffing shortage issues either in security or the business hub. Prisoners frequently complain to us that the vital contact with their families is suffering because of these issues.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

7.5.1 HMP Dartmoor is not a designated resettlement prison and does not receive a separate budget for resettlement activities. Although limited funds have been found by the prison, and staff work hard to try and assist prisoners, more money is needed to help administer resettlement. This continues to be of concern to the Board given the number of prisoners that were released directly from the prison back into the community over the reporting year.

7.5.2 From 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022, 139 prisoners were released from Dartmoor, five of whom were released to hospital. In September 2022, only one prisoner did not have an address to go to, whereas in previous years only 50% had a named address on release. The Board commends prison staff and staff from outside agencies for achieving this improvement.

7.5.3 There have been two job fairs held in the prison over the past 12 months. Board members attended and were pleased to see the wide variety of employers offering roles for prisoners due for release.

7.5.4 Members have regularly attended discharge boards over the course of the year and have been impressed with the work of staff in helping prisoners prepare for release. This includes ensuring they have accommodation, the right paperwork, a bank account set up if needed and other issues sorted to help people leaving the prison and hopefully, help in reducing the rate of reoffending. Of note is that members have seen the work of CFO3 staff in supporting prisoners prior to their release and it is a concern to the Board that all this effective work may be lost if this group, currently grant-funded, loses that funding at the end of April 2023.

## The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of visits to the establishment	431
Total number of segregation reviews attended	82

## Applications to the IMB

Reporting year: <b>2021-22</b>	Category: Applications	October 2021- September 2022 Annual totals	Information only: comparison reporting year 2020-2021
Accommodation	A	5	11
Adjudications/discipline/ incentives scheme	B	14	11
Equality/diversity	C	5	0
Education/employment	D	31	22
Family visits/ letters/phone calls	E1	34	16
Finance/pay/private monies/spends	E2	8	3
Food/kitchen	F	3	6
Health	G	29	25
Property within	H1	11	6
Property/transfer	H2	19	18
Canteen	H3	3	2
Sentence related	I	12	16
Staff/prisoner	J	40	35
Transfer	K	9	9
<b>Annual total: 223</b>		<b>223</b>	<b>180</b>



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