



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Eastwood Park**

**For reporting year  
1 November 2021 – 31 October 2022**

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## Introductory sections 1 - 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

The IMB at Eastwood Park is committed to treating all those with whom it interacts with respect and fairness taking into account such factors as race, colour, ethnicity, religion, belief, national origin, gender, age, marital status, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability.

## 2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI Eastwood Park is a female closed local prison situated mid-way between Gloucester and Bristol by the village of Falfield, South Gloucestershire.

Eastwood Park's operational capacity is currently 377 prisoners. This has been reduced from 442 due to the temporary closure of residential unit 2 for dampness remediation / refurbishment and the permanent closure of residential unit 7 first floor following fire safety concerns.

The table below shows the overall population and breakdown of sentences.

Year at 31 October	Total sentenced	Total remand / unsentenced	Those sentenced to less than 12 months	Those sentenced to between 12 months and 4 years	Those sentenced to 4 years or more
2022 (377)	246	94	46	72	73
2021 (442)	294	61	47	92	96

There are currently 13 prisoners serving indeterminate sentences compared with 16 in 2021. The number of recalls at 40 is slightly lower than the 43 recorded for the previous year.

Eastwood Park has 10 residential wings. They include a mother and baby unit (MBU), one wing specialising in dealing with those with substance misuse issues, a personality disorder unit, an induction wing for new prisoners, a wing for those suitable for open conditions and a wing for prisoners with complex needs requiring significant mental health and other input.

The prison also takes remand and sentenced prisoners from local courts, covering a wide catchment area extending over South Wales, the South, the South West, and the Midlands. Eastwood Park is the local prison for 77 courts. Around a third of its prisoners came from Wales during this reporting period.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

This has been another exceptional year because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the way that prisons have been run and on the ability of the Board to carry out face-to-face monitoring. The IMB suspended monitoring visits between 20 December 2021 and 14 February 2022 which was far briefer than the first lockdown between 11 December 2020 and 5 April 2021. However, the Board at Eastwood Park has scrutinised what has been happening at the prison throughout and continued to receive applications from prisoners, both on paper and from the national applications helpline.

There were three Governors or Acting Governors over the reporting year. There has been a major restructuring of the senior management team and a number of new appointments made. During this transition period management has continued seamlessly.

We commend management and staff on the professional and humane manner in which they have undertaken their duties during this challenging period. Our enquiries were dealt with promptly, and satisfactory responses received.

Eastwood Park has been identified for significant expansion by 2025. Planning applications are due to be submitted shortly to provide 127 additional places which will comprise three 25-room open units on land adjacent to the prison and two 26-room closed units within Eastwood Park's secure boundary.

A full unannounced inspection of Eastwood Park by the Chief Inspector of Prisons was carried out during the week of 24 October 2022. Publication of the Chief Inspector's report is awaited.

The IMB undertook a prisoners' wellbeing survey in February-March 2022 and reference is made to our findings throughout this report.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

Overall, the Board has previously considered HMP/YOI Eastwood Park as being safe for most women most of the time. Unfortunately due to staffing levels being 17.5% below target, 177 recorded prisoner-on-staff and prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, exceptionally high levels of self-harm, two deaths in custody, an act of concerted indiscipline which was resolved by the national tactical response group (NTRG), and numerous constant supervisions and hospital bed watches, we can no longer say this. Whilst efforts have been made to reduce levels of self-harm the high number of women being imprisoned with severe mental health issues has been compounded by the impact of lockdown. Eastwood Park is currently considered nationally as a prison of concern.

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

Despite considerable under-resourcing the Board continues to be impressed with the professionalism of staff and their good practice. However, as in previous reports, we cannot state that the prisoners were treated humanely because of the lengths of time they were locked down due to Covid-19. Following the end of national Covid-19 restrictions in prisons on 4 July 2022, some degree of normal regimes resumed. Regrettably staff shortages meant that education, social video calls with families, visits to the gym, exercise, activities, groups, key work sessions and inductions were regularly cancelled at short notice.

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

The Board continue to have concerns about the long-term effect on prisoners' mental and physical wellbeing due to Covid restrictions albeit we have seen considerable efforts by staff teams to keep women safe. Regrettably there was almost a doubling in the number of applications received by the IMB relating to health. All concerns were addressed promptly by healthcare. The number of women being sent to prison with severe mental health issues has had a major impact on the establishment.

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

Our concerns about staffing levels affecting offender management and key work are recorded elsewhere in this report. Also, the ongoing delays with completion of the new building, which will provide additional training facilities, impact on the successful rehabilitation of prisoners.

A major development is the opening of a ONE women's centre at Eastwood Park which is the first such facility in England and Wales. Working in partnership with the Nelson Trust and other partner organisations, the centre provides prisoners from South Wales and the South West of England with support before the end of their sentence, which continues after their release. This facility is a catalyst in reducing reoffending and core services have been available to prisoners since June 2022. So far 140 prisoners have been assisted and it is hoped that funding will be made available to continue this invaluable service beyond May 2023.

## **3.3 Main areas for development**

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

- After 1,484 days in continuous segregation a prisoner with an acquired brain injury was transferred from Eastwood Park to a medium secure NHS facility in September 2022 for assessment. What discussions has the Minister had with the Department of Health to ensure that adequate secure facilities for women with acquired brain injuries are available to avoid such inhumane treatment of women in the future?
- In response to questions raised in previous annual reports about the establishment of a women's centre in Wales, the Minister responded by

advising that seed funding had been made available. What progress has been made with this project and when is the centre likely to open?

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

- Our annual report again highlights ongoing concerns about low staffing levels at Eastwood Park and the debilitating effect that this has on safety and regimes throughout the prison. What action is being taken to provide adequate resources so that a full programme to rehabilitate women can be provided?
- The opening of the ONE women's centre at Eastwood Park provides a unique service to continuously support women before and after their release from prison. What long-term funding is being made available to ensure that this invaluable service continues beyond May 2023?
- Ongoing delays with the construction of a new activities centre mean that completion of this desperately needed facility is late by several months. Why are such delays accepted?
- The Board's survey of prisoners on trial from Devon and Cornwall highlighted lengthy daily journeys to court in prisoner escort services (PECS) transport, with toilet / sanitary facilities unsuitable for women. This caused considerable discomfort and embarrassment. What transport improvements or alternative facilities can be offered to avoid these lengthy journeys?
- The national instruction to end team based rostering in December 2021 led directly to the resignation of 10 officers at Eastwood Park. Prior to issuing this instruction was any consideration given to the effect that it would have on the retention of officers in prisons which were already under-resourced?
- Following a national instruction, transgender prisoners (male to female) in the female estate, who either have male genitalia and / or have committed sexual offences, must be held in segregated conditions until a complex case board is held which must be chaired by a prison group director. The lengthy delays in holding complex case boards meant that these transgender prisoners were being held in segregation for several weeks. What is the Prison Service doing to ensure that such boards are convened as a matter of urgency?

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

- Construction of the new activities centre is way behind the original June 2022 completion date. From handover of the building how long will it take for this important training facility to become operational?
- What action is being taken to improve officer recruitment and retention at Eastwood Park?
- Following the closure of residential unit 7's first floor due to fire safety concerns, what is the future for this building and will alternative

accommodation / facilities for women suitable for open conditions be provided?

- What action is being taken to reduce the exceptionally high levels of self-harm in the prison?

### 3.4 Progress since the last report

What we said last year	What the response was	What we found this year
We were concerned that the new offender management unit and activities centre had again been delayed.	The project will commence in the 2021/22 financial year.	Building did commence in Spring 2021 for completion June 2022. Works are ongoing but construction delays mean that this facility will not be complete until 2023.
Deep concern about a prisoner with acquired brain injury who had been segregated for 1202 days.	The Minister again outlined a range of national initiatives.	In September 2022 the prisoner was transferred to NHS Women's Medium Secure Services for a 12-week assessment after being continuously segregated for 1,484 days following regular reviews at a national level.
We asked for progress in the development of the first residential women's centre.	It was confirmed that some funding had been made available.	We are still waiting to hear when the centre will be opened.
We asked if there was to be a national needs assessment of women prisoners' physical and mental health needs.	HMPPS told us there was a review commissioned aimed at improving health and wellbeing outcomes.	The review which was originally due to report in December 2021 has been delayed. Publication is now due early 2023.
We asked why replacement windows manufactured specifically for Eastwood Park had not been fitted years later.	We were told that the fitting of the windows had not had sufficient priority.	The main window installations are now complete.



We drew attention to the large number of outstanding maintenance jobs including dampness on residential unit 2.	We were advised that a survey of residential unit 2 had been undertaken and an investment proposal submitted for approval.	Residential unit 2 was deemed to be unfit for habitation and was closed in July 2022. The outcome of tenders received for dampness remediation / refurbishment works is awaited.
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## **Evidence sections 4-7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1.1 Reception**

The reception process catered very well for the constant throughflow of prisoners. The reception area was always clean and tidy and appeared cared for. Prisoners expressed their appreciation of the reception services and the care received. There were no applications to the IMB.

Reception staff catered well for the needs of the prisoners, with meals being set aside for late arrivals and early departures. This occurred quite regularly due to the long distances and travel times to and from court. Healthcare staff were always in attendance and appointments were made as required.

#### **4.1.2 Induction**

Induction took place in residential unit 8, provided by an integrated team of staff and prisoners. When presented well, this event was of significant value to the prisoners, especially those who were arriving in prison for the first time. Due to staffing shortages, these meetings were often delayed and / or rushed with the outcome that the prisoners suffered from 'information overload'. When staffing was very tight, induction did not take place till a later date. Due to health conditions or stress on arriving in prison, much early information was not retained.

The presentation and reference material handouts could be improved. The IMB is aware that the induction process is currently being reviewed and a new booklet is being compiled.

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

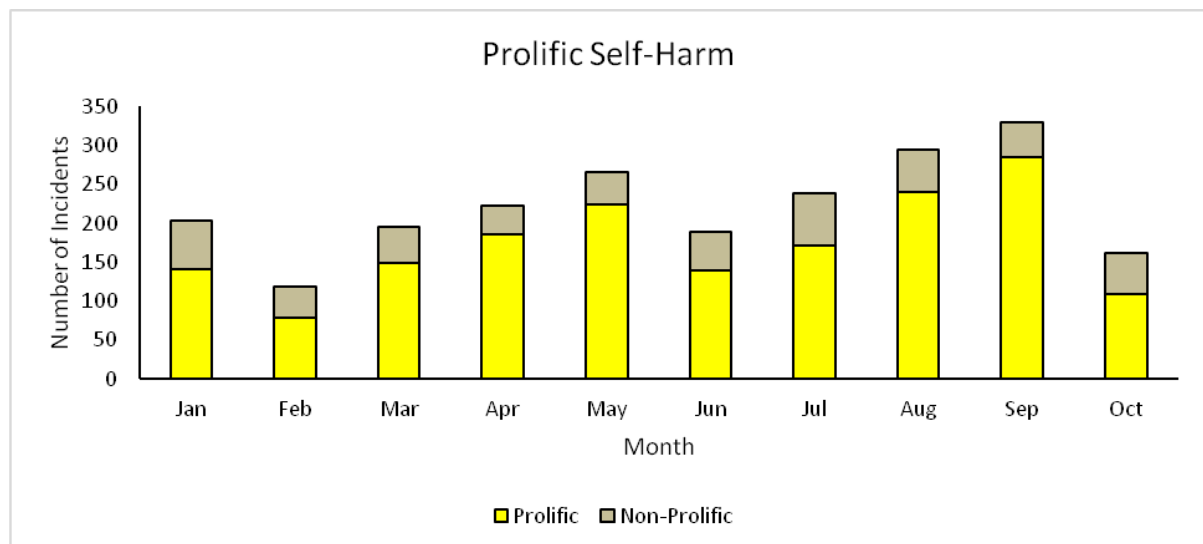
Sadly, there were two deaths in custody during July 2022 and Eastwood Park was deemed to be a cluster site. The Coroner's inquests have not yet been held, but the deaths were apparently self-inflicted. Early learning reviews were undertaken and PPO investigations are underway.

### 4.2.1 Self-harm

The call volume to the Samaritans in November was unusually low as an incorrect telephone number was given out. This was corrected and calls in December increased to 69 then settled to an average of 44 per month.

During Covid lockdown the safer custody helpline was activated on 23/12/21 using the IMB office and staffed by safer custody orderlies (SCOs) and Listeners when they were unable to visit wings. Prisoners tended not to use this as they preferred to speak to SCOs in person when movement was relaxed.

During Covid, self-harm levels spiked in January 2021 with 204 incidents, followed by an increased spike in May of 264 incidents when the prison moved to a split regime. From July to September onwards there was a concerning increase in the level of incidents. October saw the level of self-harm drop by 62% from the previous month.



By September EWP had nineteen individuals who accounted for 86% of 330 incidents for that month, eight of whom accounted for 64% of acts of self-harm. With the release of two prolific self-harmers, October saw a 52% drop in incidents-

Ligaturing was the most common method of self-harm, closely followed by cutting. The IMB observed a prolific self-harmer handing over five secreted razor blades.

Triggers for self-harm were varied: including bullying, debt, anxiety, meds, prisoner arguments. Prisoners were frustrated at the slowness of regime transition following Covid. Time in cell, boredom and lack of purposeful activity were detrimental.

There were concerning instances of prisoners self-harming whilst under supervision: a returning prisoner with an extensive history of self-harm ligatured in the reception toilet. There have also been cases of self-harm whilst under constant supervision.

In April a prolific self-harmer was put into special accommodation owing to her violence and self-harm. Her behaviour impacted on other prisoners and staff. The prisoner was visited by the IMB within 24 hours.

Support through enhanced management (STEM) and one-to-one support plans for vulnerable prisoners and self-harmers with wrap around therapeutic support overseen by multidisciplinary meetings, achieved some good results.

December saw an increase in assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans to 57 with levels remaining high throughout the year. The IMB carried out random checks on ACCT files; standards varied from good in the main to poor, with photographs missing and poor support/care/risk plans and case notes. Care maps was an area of concern as they were often inadequate or missing.

The IMB wellbeing survey increased respondents from 76 in 2021 to 175 for 2022. The response to *How safe do you feel right now?* was similar to the 2021 survey despite the doubling of respondents. Seventy-eight percent of respondents felt satisfied and above (compared with 79% for 2021).

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

#### **4.3.1 Violence and violence reduction.**

The IMB received 45 applications regarding violence/bullying (both prisoner-on-prisoner and staff-on-prisoner) safeguarding, and vulnerability/neglect. This was similar to last year's receipt of 43 applications. During lockdown the number of prisoner-on-staff assaults ranged from six in December to a peak of 14 in March. Time in cell was a marked contributory factor. As the regime opened up the numbers decreased to a range of six to 10 assaults per month. The number of women with complex needs at EWP sustained these numbers.

Prisoner-on-prisoner violence increased as more time was spent out of cell and the regime opened up. In April there were 13 incidents after which there was a slow decrease to October when four were recorded. Culture/debt/bullying were amongst the main causes. The management of women with complex needs in the general population put a strain on both the staff and the prisoners.

Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) were used to good effect to encourage and help violence reduction.

The multi-disciplinary weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM) ensured the management and support for more challenging prisoners was closely scrutinised with constructive and pro-active plans put in place along with continuing assessment and re-evaluation.

There was regular use of body worn video cameras which aided de-escalation of inflammatory situations and also helped to protect and deter.

### **4.3.2 Vulnerable prisoners and complex needs**

The number of ill and vulnerable prisoners, as well as women with complex needs, put the staff under pressure. Residential unit 4 (the wing for the care and management of mentally unwell prisoners and those with complex needs) was always full with a continual waiting list of other acutely ill women being managed on other wings.

In June there was a high-risk prisoner who was on constant supervision on the reception wing which was not designed for constant monitoring.

By September the unprecedented number of mentally unwell and vulnerable women, as well as women with complex needs at EWP who were either on residential unit 4 or being managed or receiving clinical support in the general population, due to lack of space, gave the IMB cause for concern. Owing to the acute shortage of appropriate hospital beds available in the community, these vulnerable women were subjected to containment rather than the specialist treatment they desperately needed.

In September, the atmosphere and conditions in residential unit 4 were the worst the IMB had observed; staff were being pushed to their limits. Staffing levels throughout EWP were critically low and exacerbated by the exceptional challenges of the high number of mentally ill and vulnerable prisoners.

In mid-September there was an acutely unwell prisoner on residential unit 4 who was on dirty protocol and had been in her cell for a week with no cleaning as she was aggressive to staff. Her conditions were deplorable. The IMB raised this as a matter of urgent concern (see also section 6.3).

The management of vulnerable women with serious mental health problems on other wings impacted on the prisoners. This culminated in an act of concerted indiscipline on 28 May 2022 by six prisoners on residential unit 3 who could not cope with the noise and disruption created by a prisoner who was on a waiting list for residential unit 4. One of the perpetrators was a repeat self-harmer. The incident was handled with civility and humanity by EWP and the NTRG resulting in a peaceful outcome (see also section 4.3.4).

One prisoner with complex needs endured 1,484 days in segregation before being accepted to the Orchard Unit at the end of September (see also section 5.2.1). EWP conducted reviews weekly of all the residents on residential unit 4 along with those waiting to be accepted. This was a multidisciplinary meeting which the IMB attended. It was handled with concern, humanity and thoroughness.

### **4.3.3 Safeguarding**

The IMB attended safeguarding meetings. These were multidisciplinary, well managed, conducted with care and empathy and generated constructive outcomes.

## **4.4 Use of force**

There were 398 instances during this reporting period. Eastwood Park still had some of the highest use of force figures within the women's estate. There were 56 instances of planned use of force, with the remaining 342 being unplanned.

Between April and October 2022, two prisoners were reported as having sustained injuries during use of force requiring outside hospitalisation. Three members of staff reported receiving injuries during use of force requiring outside hospitalisation.

The most common reasons for use of force were assaults or fighting, non-compliance and the prevention of self-harm. A high proportion of uses of force involved prisoners with mental health issues.

During the year, the IMB monitored some planned and unplanned uses of force. On each occasion the actions of staff were judged as proportionate and humane. As highlighted in previous annual reports, given the high number of women entering prison with mental health problems, it was the Board's view that use of force numbers could reduce if more women were diverted from the criminal justice system. Prisons are not equipped to deal with the level and nature of complexity arising from many of these cases.

The IMB attended monthly segregation and use of force meetings where body worn video camera (BWVC) and CCTV footage of incidents was reviewed. Such incidents were assessed and learning points or good practice noted.

There was a serious incident on 28 May 2022 involving concerted indiscipline when six prisoners barricaded themselves in protest about a very disruptive prisoner located on the wing. A team from the NTRG were in attendance. After several hours of negotiations the incident was brought to a safe conclusion without the use of force at 00.17am. Two IMB members attended (see also section 4.3.2).

The use of rigid bar handcuffs was introduced this year.

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

Drug testing was carried out on 75% of women entering the prison.

There was a change in policy as the prison tried to curtail the traffic in illegal drugs and so prisoners were only allowed to receive photocopies of letters and cards. Approximately 10% of mail tested for drugs was positive and so it was considered justified to continue testing. Protected correspondence e.g. legal letters, was not photocopied. Some prisoners found this distressing as they wanted to receive the original communication from family, children and friends. The policy was subsequently amended to only photocopying written / typed letters. Occasion cards, child drawings and paintings and photos are now given as originals after security screening. Some prisoners commented in the IMB wellbeing survey that they had to wait a long time for post to get to them.

Mandatory drug testing (MDT) rates were set by policy nationally.

MDTs were giving false positives for ketamine for those on certain medications.

There was a decrease in the use of buscopan.

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

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

#### **5.1.1 Accommodation, capital works / building maintenance**

Following our critical reports over several years, the significant financial investment at Eastwood Park continued to improve the quality of buildings for prisoners and staff. Works undertaken or proposed include:

- A major activities building is under construction – completion has been delayed from June 2022 to early 2023.
- In June 2022 127 additional places and increased ancillary accommodation were announced at EWP, completion by 2025, comprising two 26-bed closed units and three 25-bed open units on a site adjacent to the prison. Planning applications to be submitted.
- In association with the EWP expansion project, residential unit 7 will close over the next year. Due to fire safety concerns the first-floor landing of this modular building was closed at the end of October 22.
- The Governor informed the Board in June 2022 that residential unit 2 was being closed for remedial works because of damp and EWP's operational capacity was therefore being reduced to 397.
- Subsequently, in June 2022, funding was allocated for remedial / refurbishment works, programmed for completion in March 2023.
- Replacement of the admin block windows was completed in October 2022.
- Replacement guttering was installed in October 2022 in residential units 5 and 6.
- The number of outstanding minor maintenance jobs with Gov Facilities Services Ltd (GFSL) increased to 181 from last year's total of 112. This was due to staff illness and unfilled vacancies.

#### **5.1.2 Clothing**

If prisoners arrived at EWP without their possessions, minimum clothing requirements were issued. This worked well but there were instances of a lack of required items or sizes in stock that caused significant embarrassment and distress. The reception clothing storage facilities were not ideal and, as supplies were erratic, there was fairly poor stock control. Poor property management also impacted on women's access to proper clothing (see section 5.8)

#### **5.1.3 Food**

The quality, quantity, and availability of food within the prison was always an area of complaint, praise and disagreement. During lockdown food provision was extremely difficult due to a lack of paid catering staff, a lack of prisoner staff and erratic supplies.

Due to Covid restrictions, pre-select meals were stopped, menu choices were reduced and some food removed due to lack of staff to prepare it. This generated

many complaints to the IMB but good communication from the catering team satisfied many of the concerns.

The IMB wellbeing survey in February identified that the quality, availability and quantity of food continued to be an area of concern with 50% of respondents being unhappy or very unhappy. These figures improved on the previous year's score of 61%.

The choices, quality and availability improved and the IMB received fewer applications. This was assisted by improved recruitment and paid staff members being back to full strength.

The delivery of meals for those with special dietary needs and support for and during religious festivals was very much appreciated and received very positive comments.

## **5.2 Segregation**

Eastwood Park does not have a care and separation unit and currently there are no plans to introduce one.

If segregation for good order or discipline (GOOD) is authorised or cellular confinement awarded, prisoners are confined to their cells on their normal location, unless, for security or safety reasons, a wing move is indicated. Whenever possible during confinement, prisoners are allowed out of their cells for a maximum of an hour a day with an officer when they may choose to exercise or shower or use communal telephones.

The establishment continued to explore options to introduce a behavioural management unit. The Board was fully supportive of this development, especially because of the proactive approach to behaviour change. Regrettably this project still appears to be held in abeyance.

During the reporting period, 75 prisoners were segregated under GOOD or cellular confinement, plus 132 who were segregated under rule 53, making a total of 207. The total number of segregations was 25% lower than in the previous reporting period.

When Board members were in the prison, they visited every segregated prisoner. In the majority of cases they had no complaints about confinement. The Board was normally informed within 24 hours of a prisoner's confinement. Generally, segregation paperwork was of an acceptable standard, and the review panels attended were conducted well and with sensitivity.

Segregation periods were normally between one and 28 days. There was one instance in excess of 42 days, which was referred to the head of the women's estate for authorisation.

### **5.2.1 Long-term segregated prisoner**

As stated in the HMP Eastwood Park annual report 2020-2021 (page16), the IMB had concerns about a prisoner who had been held in continuous segregation at

Downview and Eastwood Park since 16 July 2018 (see also section 6.3). This continued into the current reporting period.

Due to her brain injury this prisoner's actions were unpredictable. After two years of multi-professional meetings, exploration of medium secure placements and the IMB's correspondence with successive Ministers of State for Justice, the prisoner was finally transferred to a medium secure hospital in September 2022 for a twelve-week assessment period. She had been continuously segregated for 1,484 days.

It was noted that all staff had worked incredibly hard to keep this prisoner very much in the minds of providers in terms of securing a bed for her while affording her as much dignity and decency as possible while being segregated. The effort of the IMB was noted by the Governor and staff for their tireless work in keeping this prisoner in the minds of successive Justice Ministers.

The Board remains firmly of the opinion that, as specialist establishments are available for men who have brain injuries, it is discriminatory that there are no secure units for women with similar injuries.

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

The critical lack of operational staff impacted on regimes preventing movement of prisoners around the site, impeded wing functioning and caused education, activities, key working, gym and visits to be postponed. Low staffing levels were exacerbated by the need for additional staff on constant watch, hospital bed watch and all other transport needs.

Although the reasons for curtailed activities were understood, the prisoners were very frustrated by the system. The prisoners' council resumed meetings when the prison came out of lockdown (see also section 5.6). It was attended by wing representatives, various staff representatives and an IMB member. Thorough discussion took place with agreed action points, some of which were implemented. A lack of staffing prevented some actions. The meetings were clerked by a prisoner.

In response to the IMB wellbeing survey question: *Can you talk to the wing staff and do they listen to you?* there were 169 respondents out of a possible 175, with 69% registering that they were satisfied and above. The previous wellbeing survey recorded 79% satisfied and above. It is to be noted that there was some strongly positive feedback amongst some of the answers.

The new shift patterns meant staff were not allocated to a single wing. This caused a great deal of upset as the relationships and trust between staff and prisoners broke down. A number of comments expressed concern about the lack of experience of certain staff.

Key work was severely hampered by chronic staffing shortages. The IMB tracked daily whether key work was happening and there were more days where key work sessions did not take place than days where they did. The compliance rates increased towards the end of the reporting year but were still relatively low, averaging eight percent.



Access to key workers was consistently low due to low staff numbers and key work time regularly being cancelled to maintain the regime.

#### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

Eastwood Park has a dedicated equalities officer (EO). However during times of short staffing she was called away from equalities work to fill in gaps in operational staffing. Consequently, some planned work, for example improving the data analysis, has been delayed. Prisoners gave positive feedback on the contribution the EO made to raising awareness of equalities in the prison and achieving some improvements in outcomes, for instance, improving the offer of products on the canteen list suitable for minorities.

In relation to Immigration cases, there has been a small number during the year - less than five - but some of those have had to wait some time for their case to be resolved. There was an issue with missing nationality data resulting in the Home Office spending time assessing people who were British.

There was progress in addressing the needs of young adult (YA) prisoners. A focus group took place but was sometimes cancelled due to short staffing. An application was made for funding so that YA specific groups could be run.

For prisoners from minority ethnic communities there were improvements in data collection with often no missing data. This was as a result of the efforts of the EO. In addition, a focus group run by the Zahid Mubarek Trust (ZMT) also took place.

For older prisoners the main activity was the Rubies, a craft-based group for the over 50s. Unfortunately, there was no allocated room for this group and no storage space for craft materials. In addition, the group took place in a room that required sufficient mobility to climb stairs. This prevented the attendance of some prisoners with mobility problems. The EO held a focus group with older prisoners to discuss the issues they face in prison (see also section 6.7).

It was difficult to draw firm conclusions about those with disabilities as there was a significant amount of missing data. There continued to be insufficient cells suitable for those with disabilities.

For transgender prisoners there were focus groups which were valued by prisoners. There were concerns, however, as a result of the signalled changes to the policy regarding transgender prisoners. Some prisoners expressed anxiety about how they might be treated by the prison service in the future. The IMB was concerned because decisions seemed to be applied regardless of a proper risk assessment. The IMB raised concerns about an elderly transgender prisoner with a gender recognition certificate who was held in segregation for several weeks awaiting a national complex case board to be convened.

For Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller prisoners there was a focus group. Prisoners commented that it was the first time they had been brought together for positive

reasons. They also welcomed the circulation of a journal called Travellers' Times which put them in touch with their community.

Each diversity and equality action team meeting reviewed disproportionality data. Consistently prisoners from minority ethnic groups put in complaints at a greater rate than white prisoners. There was no clear action arising from this.

Discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) increased this year. ZMT delivered training to managers on the DIRF process, which was welcomed. A change in the management of the DIRF process resulted in the EO not being able to produce data or track progress.

Applications to the IMB on equalities issues were a similar number to last year. Three were from minority ethnic prisoners on racism or the DIRF process. One was from a transgender prisoner about the use of names. Two were from older prisoners about access to the room where Rubies was held.

Other issues that arose during routine monitoring included:

- transgender prisoner lack of access to suitable shower facilities
- availability of DIRF forms on some wings
- the absence of a neurodiversity lead for most of the year
- very good communication and information on Ramadan events
- some issues with lack of language facilities for Polish and Vietnamese prisoners, for example, an adjudication had to be adjourned as a result.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

Approximately half of prisoners declared themselves as broadly Christian, a smaller number reported they were Pagan or Muslim and a third of all prisoners stated they had no formal religion. Very small numbers declared themselves as Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Rastafarian and Spiritualist.

The chaplaincy team worked hard throughout the Covid pandemic, maintained a face-to-face presence in the prison, and saw individual prisoners on a faith or pastoral care basis. Weekly reflection sheets were provided for all faiths when there was no corporate worship. These were sourced either within the team or shared by national faith advisors.

Weekly groups were made available for Christian (including Roman Catholic), Muslim, Pagan and Jehovah's Witness prisoners and engagement had improved over the last few months to October 2022. Some smaller (within EWP) faith groups had declined meetings but continued to receive weekly reflection sheets.

Considerable work focused on pastoral care, support to vulnerable prisoners and the wider prison community in dealing with loss of all kinds – contact with children, bereavement and the deaths in custody. The team played an active role in a number of multidisciplinary teams.

Challenges this year included maintaining chaplaincy support for specific faith groups. The greatest challenge was rebuilding confidence amongst prisoners that group worship would happen regularly and reliably.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes (IS)**

Staff and prisoners were frustrated as many of the benefits of IS could not be delivered due to the wider issues of lockdown within the prison. It was noted that during the reporting period the number of prisoners on Basic was kept at a very low level and rarely exceeded five cases at any one time.

At the prisoners' council meeting frustration was expressed that, even when the regime was opening-up, opportunities were not equal. Earned incentives and the benefit of certain privileges depended very much on location within the establishment, i.e. association time, access to the gym etc. The IMB considered this needed attention (see also section 5.3).

There were very few applications to the IMB regarding IS and it is generally seen as being managed in a fair and equitable manner.

## **5.7 Complaints**

Complaints per month ranged from 77 to 130. The dominating issue, which mirrored the applications to the IMB, was property. Between a quarter and a half were upheld each month. Most complaints were responded to within the prescribed time limit. There were between three and 35 complaints from ethnicities other than white British. Between 14 and 28 complaints came from those with a disability. Each month between six and 21 complaints were about staff and of these around half were upheld or partly upheld (see also section 5.8).

Each month the IMB looked at a sample of complaints and completed a report which was shared with prison managers. The observations included:

- It was not always clearly stated in the record or response letter whether the complaint was upheld or not and a few were not signed or dated.
- Initial response letters often did not mention the appeal process.
- Most were dealt with within the prescribed timescales and those that were late were often due to chronic staffing shortages.
- The IMB identified that some complaints where the issue was resolved between the complaint being received and the response were recorded as 'not upheld' even though the issue clearly existed. After the IMB raised this, practice improved.

## **5.8 Property**

The management and delivery of property including clothing to the prisoners was inadequate. The IMB received more complaints (121) on this subject than any other. Applications from the prisoners were not being processed effectively; property vouchers were not being delivered in a timely manner; property was late being distributed and property swaps were almost non-existent. Examples of comments from prisoners during our wellbeing survey were:

- *Wait on parcels is ridiculous. Trying to get a clothing voucher is long and then it takes forever for the parcel to get to me.*
- *Property swaps are not happening at all.*
- *The clothing scheme, we can't have our items until weeks later. Applications take several weeks to get a reply.*
- *Voucher system not working.*

Subsequently, new systems were implemented resulting in an improved, functioning operation.

## **6.0 Healthcare and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

From 1 November 2021 to 30 September 2022 Avon and Wiltshire NHS Trust was the prime commissioned provider of healthcare, working in partnership with Hanham Secure Health, Time for Teeth and external specialist services.

From 1 October 2022 Practice Plus Group became the prime provider, working in partnership with Avon and Wiltshire Partnership (AWP) who will be responsible for the delivery of mental health services and psycho-social substance misuse services inclusive of the drug recovery community. It was too early to report on this provider. This will be known as Eastwood Park healthcare service and includes primary healthcare, social care, mental health and substance misuse services, dental, optical, audiology and X ray services.

Routine screening was not affected by the Covid restrictions. Prisoners were screened on admission and during their time at EWP. Cervical, bowel and breast screening were routinely offered as well as blood borne virus screening.

Vaccinations were administered in line with the community.

The Covid lockdown meant that staffing levels across the prison and healthcare precluded longer opening hours for Pathways (the GP surgery).

After medication on admission, there could be delays if this medication could not be verified and further investigation was needed with individual services.

Some medications cannot be given in a prison environment which caused delays until alternative prescriptions could be given.

Dental services were supported with additional funding. The long waiting times for dental care during the Covid lockdown reflected similar experiences in the community.

The number of applications to the IMB about healthcare rose drastically from 36 last year to 66 this year. The head of health at EWP responded to all queries by the IMB in a timely manner. They took full precautions and the spike of Covid cases between December and March was dealt with appropriately.

### **6.1.1 Mother and baby unit / pregnancy care and services**

The purpose-built mother and baby unit had places for 12 women and 13 children, but rarely had more than eight prisoners. Over the last year there have been between three and six at one time and eight in total.

The unit was the hub for perinatal services across the prison and the base for the two recently established pregnancy, mother and baby liaison officers (PMBLOs), who provided reception screening, through to liaising with the wide range of community services required by the babies, young children and mothers placed in the MBU.

PMBLOs saw all new prisoners within five days (and usually in one to two days). They were trained to support and signpost women who have suffered recent traumatic baby loss, or separation from children living with relatives, fostered or adopted, as well as those who are pregnant.

The MBU had an excellent nursery service which was now resourced to be able to take babies and toddlers for increased visits into the community so they experienced normal 'family' activities as well as providing safe care while prisoners attended education, therapeutic groups or other activities.

Day and overnight visits for siblings in the community were developing. A local children's centre provided courses on site: 'Baby and Me' and a 'Nurturing Programme'.

The PMBLOs and managers aimed to strengthen contact with the SANDS baby loss charity. Activities were arranged to support women during Baby Loss Awareness Week in October 2022.

The challenges for the service included liaison on behalf of women whose families (and local authority services) were dispersed across the whole of the South West of England and south Wales, and building trusted professional relationships to make the best decisions for children across so many boundaries.

A premature birth in custody occurred in December 2021. The baby was delivered safely within the unit with continuing contact with emergency services by phone, as paramedics were delayed for several hours. The prison conducted a prompt 'lessons learned' inquiry and the IMB was content that, though some mistakes were made, the practical care was good and the mother felt supported with her early delivery. The outcome was safe for the baby and mother.

## **6.2 Physical healthcare**

During the reporting period 80% of the total population had the full Covid vaccination course and the additional boosters.

The healthcare team worked extremely hard to confirm medication using a range of resources including the national NHS spine, community services and mental health services.

Medical information was often delayed for prisoners from Wales as their GP service continues to request written consent to share information.

During the reporting period there was a GP on site for six days a week until 1 October. Pathways continued to provide a multidisciplinary service between the hours of 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Saturday. The telephone system was successful for those struggling to meet face to face.

Prisoners going to no fixed abode (NFA) routinely had medication given to them. However, with an increase in bail and immediate release from video link, there was not always sufficient time for this to be completed. On these occasions, a paper prescription was provided.

### **6.3 Mental health**

The mental health (MH) crisis team operated at EWP 365 days a year from 8am to 8pm. They operated across all wings providing support for first case ACCT reviews, assessing prisoners who were in crisis and implementing intervention plans to support those who were acutely mentally unwell.

Prisoners referred urgently were seen the same day, routinely within five working days, usually sooner. At the time of reporting there were good staffing levels with a new clinical psychologist imminent.

There was an identified wing accommodating up to 10 prisoners (residential unit 4). This accommodation was not fit for prisoners with complex needs. The environment was stark and bleak for these seriously ill prisoners. The unit was also not suitable for constant supervision as the prisoners could avoid staff seeing them by hiding in the toilet. The unit was full during this reporting period.

There were prisoners awaiting admission to this unit who remained on other wings that were not suitable for their needs. At times, the situation was extreme in the wing housing these prisoners. The IMB observed that one prisoner who was on dirty protest was in a filthy cell for five days as the unit was full and no clean cell was available to facilitate her transfer. This was totally unacceptable (see also section 4.3.2). One prisoner with severe mental health issues was put in a cell with distressing graffiti covering the walls from the previous occupier.

The staff had numerous constant supervisions that took time from other duties within the prison. The mental health team worked tirelessly to find beds for the prisoners in secure units.

The time taken to transfer prisoners to a secure unit increased and was causing problems within the unit. The team managed to secure most transfers within the window of 28 days from referral and 35 transfers were completed within these dates. Sixteen referrals were made but transfers not completed (usually because the provider did not agree that the grounds were met for transfer). There are six transfers currently in progress, three referred to psychiatric/intensive care units and three to secure units.

Some Welsh prisoners experienced difficulties with transfers into Wales. The mental health team has asked for a meeting with some Welsh providers to try to understand the difficulties, but they have yet to respond.

### **6.3.1 Nexus personality disorder service**

The Nexus Provision PIPE psychologically informed planned environment) accommodated up to 16 prisoners with personality disorders, providing relational activity and an enabling environment.

All prisoners on the PIPE engage in the Nexus day service where they are offered psychological assessment and therapy on a group and one-to-one basis.

Prisoners from the other wings who met the criteria but did not want to live on the PIPE or were not ready for this environment were usually able to attend for their treatment. This was impacted by the shortage of operational prison staff. The restricted regime had an impact on service delivery.

Nexus outreach service worked with prisoners on main location who met Nexus criteria but were not ready for treatment. The operational staff were redirected to cover core shifts which impacted on group delivery and one-to-one sessions where joint working was required. This continued to be a major problem across all three parts of the service.

During the second lockdown contact returned to telephone appointments.

Lock-ins due to regime were rare on the PIPE and prisoners had good access to staff and the environment.

Work and education were disrupted due to staff levels.

Nexus is part of wider offender personality disorder national research evaluating the impact on reducing re-offending. There was no local data available.

While the unit did not have the full complement of operational or clinical staff, the frequent redistribution of standalone operational staff had a far greater impact, especially key workers.

### **6.4 Social care**

During Covid, the ability to attend wings to complete assessments was limited.

Community care plans were replicated in prison to ensure prisoners with eligible needs received the care as previously assessed.

The prison social care team could not supply aids until the safer custody team had completed a risk assessment. The timely completion of a risk assessment was a concern for the prison social care team.

The team was fully staffed from January 2022. It consisted of a senior practitioner/prison lead (social worker), a social care practitioner and an occupational therapist.

## 6.5 Exercise, regime

The gym and fitness suite were closed throughout the pandemic.

A prisoner's response to exercise, recorded via the March wellbeing survey was:

*'We get unlocked at 8am and locked in again at 10.30am, sometimes 10am. During the weekend it's different 9-9.30am ish until 10.30-11am. I don't feel like this is enough time out of our cells.'*

As lockdown eased, the prison was very short staffed and the women were locked in on a regular basis.

Subsequently, women began attending the gym and also exercising outside. The pre-breakfast gym sessions began for those who were interested. Women on residential unit 7 designed their own 'track' round the building and various combinations were carried out daily.

When facilities were fully functional, a Fitness for Life scheme combining gym and healthcare was introduced. After some initial reluctance, this proved to be a popular scheme.

Considerable flexibility was applied to try to maximise time out of cells, but efforts were prevented by lack of staff.

## 6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Many of the prisoners had complex health needs, often associated with the use of illicit drugs. They had access to the drug recovery community (DRC), an abstinence programme, that worked with service users and their key workers prior to acceptance onto the programme. Upon completion, service users accessed support while on the outreach programme.

Despite Covid restrictions, there were good results that showed the DRC and substance misuse treatment provider (SMTP) intervention helped to improve outcomes.

Results included:

- 89 women completed the DRC programme
- 63 completed a detox with DRC
- 58 women remained drug free out of the 63 who had completed a detox with DRC
- nine women were referred to residential rehabilitation
- 22 women were referred to various supported housing placements (predominantly abstinence-based housing)
- 52 women engaged with DRC outreach wherever they were in the establishment
- seven women were referred to DRC but did not wish to engage

The 'through the gate' (TTG) worker coordinated the integrated release care plan for every prisoner being released, irrespective of whether they had engaged with the



SMTP. This included a range of harm minimisation information, awareness of alcohol, coca ethylene, blood-borne viruses and sexually transmitted infection, details of their nearest needle exchange, safe storage of medication (lock boxes), legalities and the importance of engaging with community services including in the event of a relapse, managing and identifying triggers and cravings, and identifying supportive networks on release.

Each service user was offered naloxone training, information and a naloxone kit provided. This helps to reduce the numbers of overdoses, which is a significant risk on release.

Service users were initially seen by a GP after which specialist prescribing continued by the non-medical prescribing team.

The case load for the substance misuse team was on average 135 at any one time. Fifty-seven percent of these were opiate users benefitting from opiate substitute therapy (such as methadone and buprenorphine), 27% were injecting users, 15% used alcohol only and 32 were poly substance abusers.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

Nelson Trust delivered courses including domestic violence, anger management and the Pegasus course, with 23 women completing full courses.

Rubies and Bluebells (groups for older prisoners) began to function as lockdown eased. The groups had no fixed accommodation which detracted from the consistency that the prisoners need (see also section 5.4).

The self-soothe group recommenced with an additional trained volunteer. Positive prisoner feedback suggested change and that acquired coping mechanisms possibly resulted in less self-harm.

Twenty-nine entries to the Koestler awards resulted in one platinum, three gold, one silver, two bronze and 22 commended awards, which all raised prisoners' self-esteem.

The gardening team achieved third place in the Windlesham trophy competition.

Bereavement counselling was offered but the waiting list was sometimes longer than a prisoner's sentence. The counsellor did not have a specific base which caused confusion for the prisoners.

A new Nelson Trust project provided a ONE women's centre at EWP (see also section 7.5).

The Nelson Trust and the DRC received praise from prisoners about the support they offered. The groups run by NT were especially valued.

EWP does not have accredited programmes such as thinking skills.

## **7. Progress and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

During the second lockdown, education delivery varied in response to the pandemic restrictions. When there was no face-to-face teaching, in cell work was provided using work packs that were changed frequently. Functional skills continued, when possible, by one-to-one contact, similarly education induction sessions took place when possible.

When face-to-face teaching returned, the lack of operational staff to collect prisoners remained challenging. In spite of the challenges, the staff managed to facilitate functional skills exams for those who were exam ready.

In July 2022, once the department was open full time, education could begin to function, but, despite best efforts, delivery remained erratic due to restricted staffing.

Some weeks resulted in only 30% classroom time; sometimes 75% classroom time was achieved but the lack of consistency impeded overall progress.

Efforts were made to synchronise and consolidate fractured learning; by September 2022 courses were fully functioning.

A positive point to note is that in the financial year 2021-22, EWP had the highest number of functional skills achievements in the women's estate, and the 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the country. By October 2022 there were only three prisoners who had no literacy skills.

Distance learning and OU courses remained popular with 55 participating prisoners. Distance learners were supported with access to computers and telephone tutorials. In October 2022 one prisoner completed an OU degree with first class honours. The graduation ceremony was due to be held in November.

From the IMB wellbeing survey, prisoners' views during the lockdown were diverse:

- *'Sick of having nothing to do. No education just locked in a room.'*
- *'Education packs are extremely helpful and are updated very often.'*

#### **7.1.1 Education staffing**

Staff were frustrated by the erratic delivery of classes for which they could not prepare with certainty. Two teachers of English left and a further retirement is imminent. The contract with Weston College had been extended into year four of the current contract with a possible two year extension until 2025.

#### **7.1.2 Library**

The library contract had been extended with South Gloucestershire Council until March 2025 in line with the current education contract.

The library was closed throughout the second lockdown. Subsequently book boxes were taken to wings and rotated between wings fortnightly. Returned books had to be quarantined for 72 hours before reuse.

When the library became fully functioning, each wing had two library sessions per week when books could be ordered through the prison.

Library facilities were well used and specifically appreciated by the prisoners who followed distance learning. The books covered a wide range of needs – easy read, other languages and those suitable for dyslexic readers.

## **7.2 Vocational training and work**

All vocational training was severely curtailed during lockdowns and a lack of operational staff.

There was considerable site disruption due to the building of a new activities block, due for completion in early 2023. It was expected to offer cable and signal box component assembly and virtual welding. Plumbing and carpentry skills along with land-based activities were being explored.

Staff stopped preparing resources prior to classes as these items were frequently wasted when groups were cancelled, at short notice, due to a lack of operational staff.

When functioning, the range of vocational skills offered included nail art, hospitality, catering, retail and customer services and soap manufacture. All remained very popular with the prisoners who appreciated the value of the transferable skills.

Weston College agreed to include an additional cleaning qualification to be delivered by a prison instructor. This gave additional scope to the skills offered.

The CLINK continues to offer places for kitchen workers to gain catering qualifications including NVQ 1 or NVQ 2 and leading to eventual employment.

The Busy Bean café within EWP continued to offer a wide range of skills for future employment. Opportunities for the café experience remained competitive and popular.

Art students have painted numerous murals on corridor walls and inside the perimeter fencing, an excellent example of which is below.



### **7.2.1 ROTL**

No release on temporary licence (ROTL) took place during lockdown. Subsequently there were eight to ten ROTL placements a day.

The team had worked to expand opportunities for ROTL but the location of the prison and lack of local public transport were difficult factors to overcome.

Kier Construction expanded opportunities by offering administration and two-year contracts training in trades (such as plumbing, electrical engineering etc.) with potentially four or five placements. This expanded opportunities for wider skill sets.

Greggs and Eastwood Park conference centre offered three placements covering a wide range of hotel skills that often resulted in employment on release.

Vinci (on site contractors) provided internal work experience on ROTL.

ROTL prisoners worked on the grounds outside the prison. One was a prison driver.

Employment on release was the aim of ROTL. The conference centre, Transport for Wales (following on from the CLINK training), Kier and Greggs have all offered employment.

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

Offender management (OM) has been in development for the past two years and progress was hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on prisons. The impact of probation reform and the recommissioning of resettlement services also led to some delays. In addition, at Eastwood Park the delays to the opening of the new building that will house the offender management unit (OMU) and additional classrooms and workshops has also slowed development.

There was a reduction in applications related to offender management. There was one about delays in a home detention curfew decision and another about progress with a release on temporary licence application. There were two others that were from prisoners anxious to be updated on their parole application or wanting to see their prison offender manager.

The new arrangements for OM meant that case management was the responsibility of community offender managers (COM) for those serving less than 10 months. There were early signs that this was creating delays as COMs with very high caseloads could be slow to progress referrals.

Given the pressures on OMU staff it was surprising that the level of dissatisfaction amongst prisoners was not higher.

The Nelson Trust had been able to increase staffing as a result of the new commissioned rehabilitation services contract. The groups they delivered were very well received by prisoners and covered sex working, and sessions entitled 'Beyond Anger and Violence', 'Healing from Trauma' and 'Pattern Changing'.

## 7.4 Family Contact

Unfortunately, there was a reduction in funding at the end of the last reporting year which meant that the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) struggled to maintain the service to prisoners and their families. Services improved during the year and by January 2022 PACT were seeing all new receptions in order to identify whether they needed the family support service. There was a family engagements manager and a social worker who worked with complex cases involving the family court. In addition, there was a project called Visiting Mums that supported children visiting prisoners from Wales. This service expanded to include prisoners from the south west by the end of the reporting year. During the year, PACT also started to locate staff in the visitor centre and there was good feedback from families about the service.

PACT was awarded a five-year contract which should improve the stability of the service.

When prison visits restarted, they were restricted and contact-free to ensure Covid conditions were upheld. For some families this was upsetting and / or frustrating and posed the question 'is a visit worth it?'

### 7.4.1 Social video calls

Social video calls worked well when available. Some prisoners said this was their preference as it overcame extensive travel problems.

The implementation of social video calls was erratic due to the lack of operational staff. In spite of a booking system, the calls were regularly cancelled at short notice without the prisoner or family being informed. This caused extreme frustration and distress

Comments received from prisoners:

- *Never booked as they are constantly cancelled, I can't risk disappointing my family.*
- *Always cancelled due to staff. If you have children / family under the age of 11 and wishing to have Purple Visits, then weekends & evenings should be prioritised for this.*
- *I feel purple visits should be a priority especially when they are to our children. Having them constantly cancelled is upsetting for them and for those involved in organising it.*
- *Of five, they have collected me for one. Don't even tell you it's cancelled just waiting around for nothing.*
- *I feel purple visits should be a priority especially when they are to our children. Having them constantly cancelled is upsetting for them .....*

## 7.5 Resettlement planning

The ONE women's centre (OWC) opened from 1 May 2022 and works as a resettlement hub. The concept is to replicate the one-stop idea so that women can access a range of resettlement services through a single location. Staffing combined

prison and partner representatives, with an attached prison officer helping to embed a trauma focused approach across the prison.

There were many changes as a result of the reconfiguring of resettlement nationally and the development of offender management. These changes were taking some time to establish and so the resettlement outcomes for women were still in need of improvement. There were many new initiatives, such as the ONE woman centre, that had the potential to transform outcomes.

A new employment lead was appointed and would be joined by housing and neurodiversity leads. We have been critical of the prison for being unable to present outcome data on employment and accommodation. It was planned that these lead officers would be able to address this issue.

The catchment area for Eastwood Park represents about 25% of England and Wales. This is a significant challenge for resettlement. For areas beyond Wales and the south west it is a bigger challenge as those involved in resettlement tried to build knowledge about what is available in those areas.

There was an ongoing struggle to find permanent and suitable housing for those being released. There were plans to provide services for remand prisoners but this had been a gap for most of the year. An accommodation lead was in the process of being appointed.

Each week a multidisciplinary discharge board was held to ensure that pre-release plans were in place for those due to return to the community. These were welcomed by prisoners.

There were issues during the year with the setting up of bank accounts which were taking so long that for short-term prisoners it was too late.

The IMB carried out a survey of prisoners about to be released. We used the same survey we had used two years ago to determine whether there had been an improvement. We interviewed 12 prisoners due to be released in the following two weeks. The following were some of the findings:

- Only four out of twelve had permanent and suitable accommodation to go to.
- Five women had been homeless before being sentenced.
- Respondents were very positive about the help they received from the Nelson Trust and the drug recovery community.
- Arrangements for the day of release had improved with many being helped to reach their destination safely and others being put in touch with people and organisations in the community that could support them.

Our main concern was the lack of a clear approach for women serving short sentences.

Overall, it was our view that there had been improvements in resettlement services but with many initiatives in their early days or being planned it was difficult to show improved outcomes, especially with the lack of useful outcome data.

## The work of the IMB

Our work during this period was again severely affected by the Covid pandemic. During periods of lockdown (December 2021 to March 2022), we kept our visits to the prison at a minimum. Board meetings were held in the prison's training centre, which is outside the main gate.

The Governor attended monthly Board meetings to keep the Board aware of all developments within the establishment.

We normally received minutes of the daily operations meetings, which included details of segregated prisoners, issues that had arisen and general statistics. During periods of remote monitoring, we normally received weekly updates from individual wings/departments throughout the establishment, which enabled us to prepare weekly reports remotely.

As direct monitoring visits were kept to a minimum, we were a pilot Board for the introduction of a national freephone IMB applications helpline. This highly successful service for prisoners has been run by volunteer Board members throughout England and Wales, with coordination by the IMB's national Secretariat.

The facility for prisoners to make written applications has also continued. Due to the exceptional circumstances, such applications have been submitted via wing complaints boxes, rather than the normal IMB application boxes, which were sealed off during lockdown. Since April 2022 our application boxes were unsealed and normal collection of applications by Board members resumed.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend our Board clerk, who scanned all written applications received during lockdown and coordinated all letters to prisoners in response to helpline and written applications received. The Governor's secretary has also been very helpful by sending us minutes of meetings and notices to staff. All communication in respect of applications between the Board and Eastwood Park has been via secure email.

Four new members joined the Board in December 2021 and January 2022. Unfortunately, their training was severely affected by the lockdown, and normal national training courses were suspended because of the pandemic. Regrettably two of the new members resigned due to pressure of work in their normal employment. National online training was available and worked well.

National face-to-face training courses resumed later in the year. One member attended national training in October 2022 and the other is due to attend in December 2022. Both members made visits to the establishment as often as possible.

The annual wellbeing survey of prisoners was also carried out. Following concerns raised with the IMB by the outgoing High Sheriff of Devon, focused enquiries were made about the experiences of women from Devon and Cornwall who had to endure



daily journeys to and from court of up to 300 miles whilst on trial. Our findings were shared with national IMB and HMPPS management.

The Governor, management team and senior staff have been accessible and extremely helpful to the Board during this difficult time. We were confident that information provided remotely by the prison accurately reflected conditions in Eastwood Park.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the establishment	340
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line*	120 plus (estimated)
Board members interviewed and awaiting appointment at end of the reporting period.	0 (ongoing recruitment in progress)

### Applications by month

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
20/21	9	5	11	5	6	30	38	37	32	46	26	59
21/22	39	17	13	39	32	42	60	29	29	44	24	29

## Time taken to deal with applications

	Within one day	Within one week	Longer than a week
2020/21	42%	51%	7%
2021/22	37%	60%	3%

## Applications to the IMB (including via the 0800 telephone line)

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
C	Equality	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	<b>27</b>	<b>43</b>
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>
F	Food and kitchens	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	<b>36</b>	<b>66</b>
H1	Property within this establishment	<b>95</b>	<b>121</b>
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	<b>43</b>	<b>45</b>

K	Transfers	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
	Total number of applications	<b>307</b>	<b>397</b>

The IMB helpline was in full operation throughout the year. There was a corresponding drop in EWP helpline applications, reverting to paper or verbal applications to the IMB as the regime opened up.

Paper applications represented 96% and 0800 applications 4% of the total.

There was a big increase in applications during the middle of the year. This coincided with the IMB returning to face-to-face monitoring and the lifting of national Covid restrictions within prisons. The 60 applications received in May was a record for one month. The largest rises were in applications relating to letters, healthcare and property. Due to security concerns about letters being sent in to prisoners they now receive photocopies. Many prisoners were unhappy about this change. We reported last year that the system for receipt and distribution of incoming property to prisoners had broken down. This was due, we were told, to the limited number of staff available to process requests and a vast increase in parcels being sent in to prisoners. Following a restructuring of this department the large backlog of parcels / property was cleared. There has been a noticeable improvement in the handling of prisoners' property.

Many applications we received regarding health matters should have been submitted via the healthcare team's 'Listening to You' complaints system. Prisoners were subsequently advised to use this system. Where more general concerns were raised with the head of healthcare we received comprehensive replies promptly.

Despite the disruptions of lockdown the Board continued to answer applications, normally within a week. Only 3% took longer, usually as we were awaiting information from a third-party.

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