



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Morton Hall

**For reporting year
6 December 2021 – 31 December 2022**

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All IMB annual reports are published on www.imb.org.uk

Introductory sections 1 - 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

2.1 Morton Hall has been used for custody and detention for many years. It closed on 23 July 2021 as a Home Office (HO) immigration removal centre (IRC) after some ten years' operation. It reopened on 24 July 2021 as HMP Morton Hall, a category C prison for adult male foreign national prisoners. Morton Hall used the summer and autumn to prepare for taking prisoners from December 2021, based upon a 're-role' plan developed by Morton Hall and authorised by the prison group director. The plan included:

- physical refurbishment including category C and fire security upgrading, continuing into autumn 2022
- planning of educational and purposeful activities by third parties and directly employed instructors
- training of prison officers and officer support grades (OSGs) either on-site or detached duties; governor liaison with the (then) other two HMPs for foreign national prisoners

- phased growth of prisoner numbers from 20 in early December 2021 to an operational capacity of 353 by August 2022

2.2 Prisoners live in one of five units, opened in the following order:

Fry: 40 basic ensuite single cells on the ground floor landing repeated on the first floor; Windsor: as Fry; Torr: 48 single cells with shared toilets and showers on each of two ground floor landings; Sharman: 72 single cells and a disability suite, with shared toilets and showers as Torr; and Johnson: as Sharman but no disability suite.

2.3 Other than Fry and Windsor all prisoner facilities are at ground floor level in dispersed buildings accessed through lawned grounds and footpaths. Officer line-outs supervise movements. There is a library, multifaith centre, gymnasium, workshops (including one undertaking external commissions), an educational facility and a health centre. Visitors report to a reception centre outside the main gate prior to entering the visits hall.

2.4 Food is prepared in the main kitchen. Prisoners in Windsor and Fry receive pre-ordered hot meals twice daily through a heated trolley system and eat in their cells; those in the other units collect pre-ordered hot food from the main kitchen server and also eat in their cells.

2.5 A majority of the former IRC staff including the governor grades transferred to Morton Hall with comparable roles, for example the IRC's centre manager became the Governor. During the year transferees were joined by new staff, mainly as newly qualified officers or OSGs.

2.6 Morton Hall operates as other category C prisons, but has an additional responsibility to the HO. In practice, the sentence planning, resettlement and release functions are circumscribed by HO (immigration) rules, or decisions made by immigration caseworkers, with deportation at the end of sentence or before being the most likely outcome.

3. Executive summary

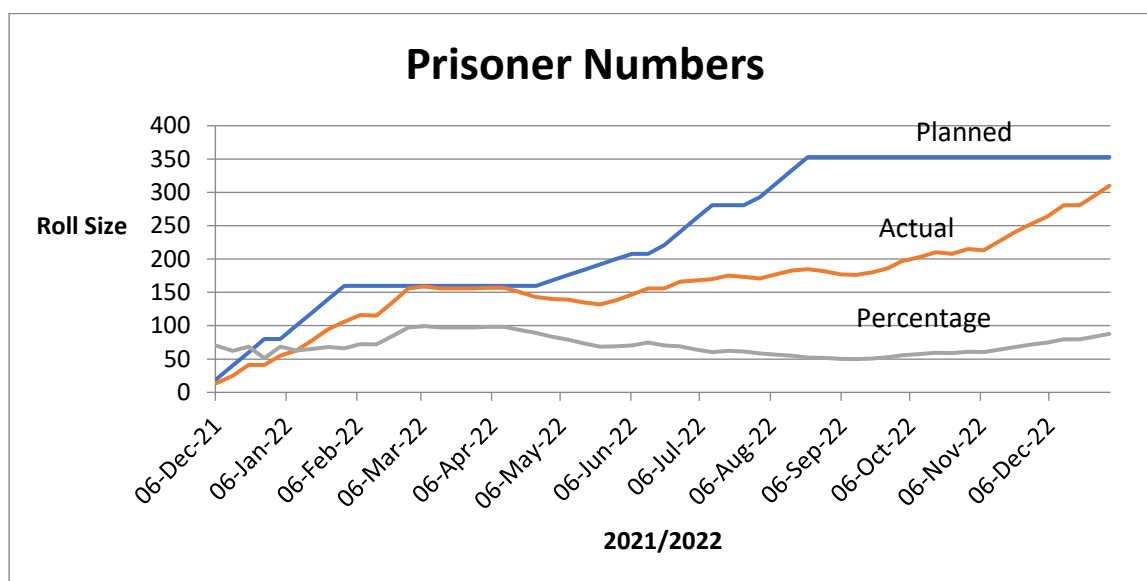
3.1 Background to the report

3.1.1 This is in the context of a prison in progress towards, but not having achieved, an established role and regime. It is in transition from an IRC culture – involving management of detainees through the interpersonal skills of staff – to one able to deploy the incentives scheme and uphold discipline using adjudication and sanctions for prisoners. As put in the Governor's Christmas message thanking staff: 'We have opened a prison, introducing prison policies and expectations and many of us have had little, or for some no recent experience of working in a prison. We have a long way to go to get processes and daily routines right but we are adapting and changing where we can to improve systems for staff and prisoners'. (Weekly Bulletin 23 December 2022).

3.1.2 Our ability to make fully evidenced comments, especially about trends or changes, is limited by the small number of prisoners for much of the year. Notwithstanding much raw data and the carefully prepared summary reports that

Morton Hall produces, the interpretation of small number data against a growing prison population is at best speculative. For example, in monitoring changes over time, is the increased use of cellular confinement – nil in quarters 1 and 2, three occasions in quarter 3 and five in quarter 4 – a result of a growing population or an increased emphasis on the use of sanctions? (Appendix 1).

3.1.3 Morton Hall as it operated with the first five prisoners in December 2021 is a very different prison to the one which operated a year later, and it will be different again by the time this report is published. The re-role plan envisaged a very gradual increase in the roll to allow smooth inception but even so, the actual roll fell short of that plan, as shown in the chart below. For example, when the operational capacity was expected to be achieved, Morton Hall was 52% occupied; and by the end of the reporting year 88%.



3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

3.2.1 Morton Hall is a safe place, with little evidence of widespread use of illicit substances; the few prisoners becoming at risk from others are quickly identified and, if needed, isolated for their own safety and transferred to other prisons.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

3.2.2 Morton Hall treats prisoners fairly and humanely. There is a welcoming atmosphere and officer-prisoner relationships are good, with many observed examples of helpful assistance given to prisoners. There is a strong emphasis on ad-hoc and regular consultation with prisoners; notice is taken of their views and there are speedy responses. There is multifaith provision and around a third of the prison population attend Friday prayers (at December 2022).

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

3.2.3 Morton Hall meets these needs through screening assessments on arrival and easy access to physical and mental healthcare services, with active healthcare

involvement in prisoner management. A refurbished gymnasium operated from autumn 2022 and is well used.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

3.2.4 Preparation for resettlement through education and work opportunities until the autumn of 2022 was constrained because of low prisoner numbers leading to a narrow range of activity, and peer roles of limited work content. With larger prisoner numbers and the opening of workshops the range and quality of provision improved. The work ethic is not fully in evidence, as prisoners are allowed to amble and socialise during movements to work, reducing their time at work and in education.

3.2.5 Resettlement in terms of release is within an HO framework, with a high proportion of prisoners deported and some released on immigration bail. Opportunities for resettlement through the release on temporary licence (ROTL) and home detention curfew (HDC) schemes are virtually nil, given immigration constraints. Resettlement opportunities using the early removal scheme (ERS) – deportation up to nine months (12 months from June 2022) before sentence end – are largely missed. A number of prisoners are held under Immigration Act powers, (rule IS91) having completed their sentences.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

3.3.1 The Minister is asked to consider, as appropriate with other Ministers,

1 that many prisoners eligible for ERS do not leave at the earliest opportunity, indeed many arrive at Morton Hall well into the nine to 12-month period within which they could have been deported (see paragraphs 3.2.5, 7.3.3)

2 that many prisoners who are held under Immigration Act powers post-sentence (rule IS91) do not receive timely notification from the HO (see paragraphs 3.2.5, 7.3.4).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

3.3.2 The prison service is asked to consider, when re-rolling, or commissioning other prisons,

1 whether the planned slow increase – and more so the actual rate – in the prisoner population worked to overall advantage, given the frequent adjustments to the regime (over and above those of the Covid requirements) (see paragraph 3.1.2)

2 in consequence, the limited purposeful activity opportunities for prisoners for the majority of the reporting year (see paragraphs 3.2.4, 7.2.1)

3 the arrangements for identifying and transferring foreign national prisoners from other prisons, given the significant gap between the planned and actual roll (see paragraphs 3.1.2, 7.3.1)

and more generally:

4 to improve the systems for interprison property transfer (see paragraph 5.8.1)

5 to consider increasing the daily food cost allowance, given levels of food cost inflation and the reliance on carbohydrates (see paragraph 5.1.2).

TO THE GOVERNOR

3.3.3 The Governor is asked to consider,

1 extending the contract for librarian services to provide absence relief cover, avoiding the need to close the library and rely on the trolley service (see paragraph 7.1.3)

2 reducing the rate of returns for canteen goods and in particular ensuring a satisfactory quality of food items, notably cheese and fresh fruit, and ensuring that prisoner returns are refunded promptly (see paragraph 5.1.8)

3 using the opportunity of the spring 2023 reprofile to improve prisoners' work ethic and general approach to work by ensuring they report for work on time (see paragraph 3.2.4)

4 tightening up and/or amending the processes for roll reconciliation so that prisoners can take part in planned activities on time (see paragraph 6.5.4).

3.4 Progress since the last report

This is the first report.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 New receptions usually arrive in low single figure numbers, are searched and undergo body scanning, and receive initial assessments including risk and health. Since the opening of the Johnson unit, new arrivals are normally located there on the induction landing. There are no bulk drafts from other prisons or transfers in from courts; arrival times depend upon the incoming transport.

4.1.2 The prisoner induction process initially taking place on Fry unit for very small numbers became diffuse as the year progressed so that by the end the year there was confusion, at one point with some 30 prisoners not receiving timely induction.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 Here and below the data is largely in single figures for each quarter for the ten measured attributes with exceptions for new openings of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents and incidents of self-harm (Appendix 1). There is no discernible trend. There were no suicides or deaths in custody. A Samaritans Listener scheme was introduced in November and prisoners can use in-cell telephones to contact the Samaritans.

4.2.2 Morton Hall's own survey responses to the question 'What areas are you concerned about in regards to your safety?', gave the highest ranking to 'no concerns', with prisoners rating that six times ahead of their next concern and officers twice as much as their next concern (Safety Summit, Staff and Prisoners, November 2022).

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 There were 17 incidents of prisoner-on-prisoner violence and six of assaults on staff (Appendix 1). Standard practice for the more serious incidents – of which only one resulted in a prisoner receiving longer-term care in the disability suite, because of a serious injury – is the speedy removal of alleged offenders to the care and separation unit (CSU) pending adjudication. There were no incidents requiring the opening of the command suite.

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 There were 33 use of force incidents. Morton Hall was not authorised to use PAVA spray but none of these incidents would have needed it. However, staff have been trained and use is authorised for 2023.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

4.5.1 In December 2022 there were hooch (illegally brewed alcohol) finds reported in the daily briefings. These were attributed to allowing prisoners to accumulate fresh fruit through canteen ordering and insufficient attention to accommodation fabric checks. Dealing with an apparently growing problem led to prisoners being restricted in the amount of fruit they can keep, with governors working as mentors alongside less experienced officers to improve cell searching.

4.5.2 In addition to prisoners being searched on arrival, prisoners' visitors are also searched and scanned before they enter the visits hall and may also pass by search dogs. There are unannounced intelligence-informed dog searches.

4.5.3 The drugs strategy meeting is well attended by staff and managers who review information and agree actions to restrict the supply of illicit items, reduce demand and build recovery. There is close working with the police including sharing intelligence on 'county lines' and work to address throw-overs of mobile phones, related paraphernalia and drugs. The main drug of choice is cannabis, plus hooch.

4.5.4 There are regular and suspicion based mandatory drugs tests but few are positive. Incoming mail is routinely scanned for illicit substances but so far prisoner mail is not a source of drugs.

4.5.5 There has been negligible disruption due to illicit items, though suspicious financial activity, possibly linked to payment for drugs or other illicit items, has been identified, in Morton Hall's security reports.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 There are good stocks of prison clothes although most prisoners wear their own and can also purchase them. Cells, checked and refurbished prior to reopening, are of a decent standard (albeit with some missing or ill-fitting curtains). Communal areas are cleaned by designated prisoners with prisoners responsible for their own rooms. Personal laundry is done by designated prisoners on each unit. There was

only one complaint about a cell and another about the temperature of shower water; neither were upheld, the latter explained by legionella precautions.

5.1.2 The kitchen feels well managed and is clean. The daily budget per prisoner of £2.15 proved a challenge, with price inflation and a struggle to source some items (e.g. chicken) causing menu changes. Prisoners receive two hot meals plus a pre-packaged basic breakfast. The food quantity is good but quality is reduced as cheaper foodstuffs and carbohydrates dominate menus; a healthy option is available.

5.1.3 Prisoners are typically satisfied with the quantity and quality of the food compared to their previous prisons. There were 13 complaints about food with nine upheld. Five were about not receiving the meal that had been ordered; this arose where the menu choices were not delivered to the kitchen in time for ordering or preparation and a vegetarian meal was provided by default.

5.1.4 There is a full catering team and a sufficient number of prisoners working in the kitchen, described by the catering manager as 'a strong and settled workforce.' That is the IMB's opinion too.

5.1.5 During Ramadan, meals were issued as breakfast and lunch packs with a hot meal consumed after sunset being supplied in a thermos container. Dates, chapatti, naan bread, yoghurt and onion bhaji are supplied. For special diets including diabetic and vegan there is no extra funding, with costs expected to be built into the catering budget. There is a concern that meals for other prisoners may not be funded as well, and their quality reduced, because of the extra cost of these diets.

5.1.6 The relative freedom of movement in Torr, Sharman and Johnson combined with the food collection system means some prisoners use their pre-ordered food as ingredients either to make other dishes supplemented by canteen products or to mix and share with other prisoners.

5.1.7 We are assured by governors and prisoners alike that those in Torr, Sharman and Johnson units prefer the meal collection and return to cell system rather than using the dining room, despite having to collect plated meals open to the elements (and on occasion swooping seagulls) and what could be seen as a health hazard. However there have been no known cases of food poisoning and the like.

5.1.8 Prisoners value the opportunities to purchase canteen goods weekly at their own expense to supplement Morton Hall provision, for example toiletries and comestibles. The arrangements for issue of canteen orders have altered during the year but there remains prisoner dissatisfaction with the externally contracted DHL service concerning fruit going bad and on occasion mouldy cheese. There are also delays in processing refunds and crediting prisoner accounts, though we understand that shortfalls are sometimes made up by Morton Hall monies.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 The care and separation unit (CSU) has been used for 36 incidents (Appendix 1) but is often closed as not needed. The IMB is routinely advised of new admissions to the CSU. It is used for adjudications and good order and discipline (GOOD) reviews which are observed by IMB members. Two officers are detailed for duty but in the afternoons one may be called away for other duties. Here and elsewhere (see for example paragraph 5.3.2) officer vacancies have not caused operational difficulties across the prison but staffing is below the profiled levels.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

5.3.1 A hallmark of Morton Hall is the way in which governors encourage a rehabilitative approach and officers respond through supportive actions in their dealings with prisoners. There are few complaints about officers (see paragraph 5.7.4) and prisoners are overwhelmingly complimentary about them. There are however instances where the IRC culture rubs against the HMP culture so that some officers tolerate behaviour – such as shouting of strong abuse – while others respond by enforcing discipline using sanctions. This was also evidenced in the safety summit: when asked, ‘what in the prison causes your frustrations?’, officers identified ‘staff inconsistency’ in the top four.

5.3.2 Key working is in operation with an average of 12 days from reception to the first session. However, key workers are often redeployed to assist with meal delivery and outside exercise. Around 50% of sessions are covered – prisoners get a session fortnightly not weekly – but ranked against comparator prisons, Morton Hall is in the top 10% for delivery.

5.3.3 Around 15% of officers are routinely on detached duties helping to staff other prisons, with some 25% of the available Morton Hall overtime being taken up. Taken together these features impact upon the effectiveness of planned work which can be undertaken, for example accommodation fabric checks.

5.4 Equality and diversity

(In this section Morton Hall data and analysis from late autumn 2022 has been used as greater prisoner numbers make raw numbers and data comparisons more meaningful.)

5.4.1 There is a young age profile: the majority of prisoners are aged 20-29 and within that group 20-25-year-olds dominate; around 15% of prisoners are over 40.

5.4.2 Overall, around half of prisoners identify themselves as white, with two-thirds of the remainder identifying as black and the next third as Asian. Amongst prisoners aged up to 24, there are almost as many identifying as black as white.

5.4.3 The Muslim faith is the most commonly found, at around twice the level of the next most common – Roman Catholic and other Christian denominations. Some 16 faiths are in evidence alongside those who are agnostic or of no faith.

5.4.5 The most common nationality is Albanian, almost twice the level of the next most common nationalities – Polish and Romanian; over 60 nations were represented.

5.4.6 Typically some 10% of prisoners have a recorded disability; about 90% of prisoners identify as heterosexual with the remainder largely undisclosed.

5.4.7 Data on age, ethnicity, nationality, and religion is routinely mapped against prison activity with a view to ensuring equality including mandatory drug testing (MDT), adjudications, complaints, use of force, and employment. Except for the possibility (see paragraph 3.1.2 above) that black prisoners are over-represented in areas mainly concerned with intelligence-led suspicions, and Muslim prisoners over-represented on the basic status, there are neither discernible trends nor obvious discrimination. We noted that though Albanian prisoners make up two-thirds of equalities representatives, they also make up the largest majority of the prison population.

5.4.8 Morton Hall publicises and seeks to celebrate national events, among them Martin Luther King and Holocaust Memorial days.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 The chaplaincy team held services throughout 2022 for most faiths. Weekly services were held for Muslim and Sikh prisoners, as well as for three Christian denominations: Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. A Buddhist service was held fortnightly. Rastafarian prisoners do not have a chaplain but study materials are available and they can meet together. There is no Hindu chaplain, but support is given by the Buddhist chaplain. There is a full-time and part-time imam ensuring good provision for Muslims.

5.5.2 The managing chaplain has unfortunately been on sick leave from July but supported the team via email. The absence has impacted temporarily upon Sunday morning services for non-Orthodox and non-Catholic prisoners, but from September these services have been covered by colleagues and volunteers, supported by a chaplain or prison staff. There is weekly Bible study.

5.5.3 Normally, the chaplaincy would be represented in prison meetings but in the managing chaplain's absence this has not always been the case, though meetings concerning prisoner welfare are attended. Chaplains support prisoners throughout bereavement, helping to arrange funeral attendance or watching the funeral remotely in the multifaith centre. There are links with two church groups and a prison fellowship: the latter provides books and other material.

5.6 Incentives schemes (IP)

5.6.1 Typically, almost half the prisoners are on enhanced status, and almost another half on standard, with a handful of prisoners on basic.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 End of month information on the number and category of complaints is reviewed (Appendix 2). Complaints proportionate to prisoner numbers were highest in the spring quarter. There are no obvious trends but multiple complaints about a single issue can skew the figures. An example from May is prisoners not being able

to access Romanian and Kurdish music CDs; another example from December is canteen-ordered fresh fruit going bad.

5.7.2 Individual complaints are sampled during the year to check for reply quality and timeliness of response. Complaints are responded to on time and replies are of a good standard; appeals against complaint responses invariably receive fuller consideration and detailed replies explaining decisions. An exception to timeliness occurred in December when staff absence meant response target dates were missed, though all but one was actioned within five working days.

5.7.3 Applications to the IMB (Appendix 2) show nine about staff. On examination these do not reflect what prisoners tell us about officers and a check of the prison complaints system shows that complaints from prisoners about staff are less than 3% of the total.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 On arrival prisoners are shown a list of property they are allowed to have in their cells. Other property is held securely and a detailed inventory is maintained. There were 17 IMB applications about property, ten concerning a previous prison, usually being claims that possessions have not been transferred in full, and seven related to Morton Hall, with prisoners claiming in these applications or in discussion that there was unfairness as prisoner property allowed in a previous prison was not allowed at Morton Hall.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 This is provided under contract from Nottingham Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust as a seven-day 24 hour service, with the range of primary care services normally expected in the community. These are supplemented by specialist nurse-led clinics (nurse triage, long-term condition management, emergency response, and health screening for alcohol and addiction, diabetic retinopathy and bowel conditions) and by visiting sessions from specialist psychiatry, optical services, podiatry and dentistry.

6.1.2 The healthcare service considers that, because of the criteria prisoners need to meet to be transferred to Morton Hall, the population is relatively healthy. While the ground-floor level facilities are suitable for prisoners with mobility problems including wheelchair use, such prisoners are not in evidence.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 Prisoners are seen on arrival by a nurse for healthcare screening to include an assessment of physical health, substance abuse, prescribed medication, and any planned hospital appointments and care. Follow-up referrals are also determined.

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 This is included in healthcare screening on arrival. The mental health team carries the most vacancies; the caseload is managed by a clinical matron with on-site support from a visiting psychiatrist who also offers advice by email.

6.4 Exercise, regime

6.4.1 There is a well-equipped gymnasium, especially since refurbishment was completed mid-year. Good use is made of the gymnasium, with instructors on hand to supervise. Use is also made of the astroturfed field area, and some prisoners make use of the outdoor exercise equipment dotted throughout the grounds.

6.4.2 There have been several regimes during the year. These were brought about by reduced Covid restrictions but in the main were the result of the gradual rise in prisoner numbers and the adjustments needed in consequence, as well as staff needing to learn and enforce them. For example, limited education first took place in the Fry unit dayroom, then in an area of the disused dining room, then in the education building.

6.4.3 When asked their view, Morton Hall prisoners almost always say they prefer it to their last prison, citing especially the helpful and supportive attitude of Morton Hall officers (see also paragraph 5.7.4). When asked about disadvantages, many say they missed the settled regime (i.e., knowing what was happening and expected of them) and that they were more fully occupied than at Morton Hall. This was especially the case for the early arrivals. The top frustration for officers (expressed at the safety summit) was also the unsettled regime.

6.4.4 As prisoner numbers rose there were occasions when reconciliation of the roll was delayed with recounts taking place which delayed prisoner access to timetabled activities.

6.4.5 The need to access toilets and showers in the Torr, Sharman and Johnson units means that prisoners there have more time out of cell than those in Windsor and Fry, which accommodates prisoners with a higher risk profile.

6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.5.1 The substance misuse team comprises a lead member, a dual diagnosis nurse and four substance abuse practitioners. They provide one-to-one sessions and group work. At the end of November there were 14 prisoners on the caseload with three receiving treatment. An alcohol awareness group started in December; four or five prisoners attend weekly. A drugs awareness group and drop-in sessions in the residences are planned.

6.6 Soft skills

6.6.1 There are opportunities for personal development and self-awareness. Many of these involve People Plus as the education provider, for example sessions on understanding stress, personal budgeting and money management, during workshop sessions, planning, adaptability teamwork, reliability and more. Other examples include the Shannon Trust helping prisoners to read and a physical education instructor running a 16-week Stoic philosophy course.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 There is a dedicated education facility located in the activities area, run under contract by People Plus. Courses include English for speakers of other languages

(ESOL), mathematics, English, and more. Prisoners are able to study for externally accredited qualifications such as City and Guilds.

7.1.2 There is a library, managed under contract by Lincolnshire County Council and delivered by Greenwich Leisure Ltd. The library has a capacity for 20 prisoners and is able to source foreign language books and compact discs, but with difficulty in accessing music CDs from some countries, for example Kurdistan: prisoners complain about that. The library has introduced the Storybook Dads initiative. This allows fathers to record stories for their children and is increasingly popular: four or five prisoners make a weekly recording. The library offers books on legal subjects in hard copy and online using three computers under supervision.

7.1.3 The library is a popular service and has one member of staff; when absent the library is closed and a limited trolley service operates.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 The provision of vocational training has been affected by the slower than expected rise in the prisoner population, in particular limiting the start date for workshop activities and courses. By the end of the year and in addition to peer mentoring roles and unit based work as cleaners or laundry workers, prisoners were able to engage in painting and decorating (City and Guilds level 1 courses), refuse recycling, grounds and gardens (structured learning on accredited courses: polytunnels were installed to cultivate vegetables and plants.) Other courses included barbering, woodworking (including recycling wooden pallets to make garden furniture using hand tools only) and de-kitting (stripping down Covid masks and lateral flow test kits to their component parts for recycling). More opportunities are planned for 2023 including contract work to manufacture lobster pots and the opening of a bistro to provide catering experience.

7.2.2 We suspect the effectiveness of vocational training – and also soft skills activity – may be reduced by the turnover (referred to locally as ‘churn’) of prisoners; 498 were transferred in and 224 transferred out, during the reporting year.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 In December there were 9700 foreign national prisoners in prison establishments, with some 400 eligible for transfer to Morton Hall. This takes account of the relaxation of transfer criteria in October – previously, sentences of between three and 30 months, which was extended to 36 months. In addition, a wider range of criminal backgrounds and behaviour was allowed. This resulted in a marked rise in the population in the last quarter.

7.3.2 The work of the offender management unit (OMU) takes account of HO interest in prisoners and the outcomes for them, including when and to where they can be released. For example, while, as with other category C prisons, there are formal recategorisation reviews, HO requirements dominate, so that of around 150 cases only ten prisoners transferred to category D. Similarly, of the 498 prisoners who transferred in, only one prisoner left on home detention curfew (HDC or tagging), either because of the statutory bar or because the HO identifies them as ‘presumed unsuitable’. Release on temporary licence (ROTL) is not offered.

7.3.3 The early removal scheme (ERS) allows prisoners to be deported up to nine months before their conditional release date (CRD), and 101 prisoners benefitted. However, prisoners commonly transfer in having passed their ERS date, being held in prison when earlier HO processing of their cases would mean earlier deportation and a reduced prison population overall. November data shows that of 55 receptions 20 had passed their ERS date and another 14 were within three months of it.

7.3.4 Prisoners who have reached their CRD but cannot be released for HO reasons are detained under Immigration Act powers, under rule IS91; they may agree to conform to Morton Hall rules and remain there or be transferred to a reception prison. September data shows nine IS91 prisoners – from a roll of 187 (2%) – passing their CRD by between one and 59 days. Notification of IS91 detention by the HO is mainly outside the target agreed with Morton Hall, with prisoners learning of it close to their CRD.

7.3.5 More generally, as identified by the safety summit, '[lack of] home office support' – meaning concerns about immigration matters – caused prisoners four times more frustration than any other issue, and in respect of recategorisation the OMU received complaints. While there are HO staff at Morton Hall who make frequent contact with prisoners, the advice they can give is limited by the need for off-site HO caseworker decisions.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Prisoners can make phone calls to approved numbers on in-cell telephones. Social video calls are an important and valued way of maintaining family links. Prisoners have reported problems with the technology, claiming videos cut out if more than one adult and child is present for the visit. The email-a-prisoner scheme is also available but some prisoners have reported delays in getting responses to emails and also delays in receiving parcels.

7.4.2 The Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) runs the visitors centre and provides practical and emotional support for families. Visitors say that the Morton Hall visitors' centre is much friendlier and more welcoming than other prisons.

7.4.3 There have been three family days. These usually have a theme and coincide with school holidays. One visitor explained that she values the activities set up for families to play together and also the opportunity to have a family photograph taken.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 There is a resettlement strategy with weekly meetings to consider individual prisoner cases and target action dates. A walk through of the process was provided, including examples of how prisoners are supported by LAT – the contracted resettlement practitioners – and specialist officers. Morton Hall ensures prisoners facing deportation are prepared for, and, as far as practicable, supported in their destination country even if they have never lived there.

8 The work of the IMB

8.1.1 Throughout our work governors and operational and administrative staff have been supportive of our involvement, with ready access to reports and data, face-to-face discussion, and a frankness in sharing operational matters. We have been provided with good office accommodation and facilities and the services of an effective IMB clerk. For this we record our appreciation.

8.1.2 Our work in the first year of Morton Hall, as a new Board with members of varying IRC and HMP experience, has necessarily been affected by the pace of growth in the prison population and the activities which could be monitored . Accordingly we tended to focus our efforts on the essentials of prison life, with safety and humane treatment at the forefront, while developing our interest and understanding of, for example, resettlement in a prison where prisoners are 'of interest to the Home Office' and subject, over and above HMPPS strictures, to immigration rules and HO procedures.

8.1.3 For 2023, with a larger roll (around 330, 94% of the operational capacity at mid-February 2023) and a wider range of activities introduced at the turn of 2022 or planned for 2023, there will be more to monitor and data will be usefully comparative. We are linking with HMPs Huntercombe and Maidstone to share immigration-related issues. Subject to the results of our forthcoming annual team performance review (ATPR) we are likely to take a theme-based approach to subjects like resettlement.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Safety

Attribute	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Prisoner on prisoner violence	0	7	6	4	17
Assaults on staff	1	0	2	3	6
Use of force	4	8	13	8	33
New ACCTs* opened	10	3	10	11	34
Incidents of self-harm	2	12	19	5	38
Located in CSU** pending adjudication	2	5	3	2	12
Located in CSU- cellular confinement	0	0	3	5	8
Located in CSU –GOOD***	4	4	5	3	16
Incidents – under the influence – illicit substance	0	0	3	0	3
Drug finds on AFCs****	0	0	0	0	0

*Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork

** Care and Separation Unit

** Good Order and Discipline Review

***Accommodation Fabric Check

Appendix 2

Complaints Summary

(a fuller breakdown including nature of complaint and whether upheld or not is reviewed by members)

	Number of complaints	Roll last day of month	Complaints as a percentage of roll*	Not answered in time frame	Upheld
Jan	5	95	5	0	1
Feb	17	135	13	0	2
March	26	151	17	0	3
April	26	145	18	1	4
May	21	132	16	1	7
June	17	162	11	1	6
July	33	173	19	4	4
August	20	187	11	0	3
Sept	20	187	11	1	8
Oct	30	208	14	2	3
Nov	23	247	9	4	6
Dec	33	310	11	9	7

*figures rounded

Appendix 3

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	N/A	1
B1	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions		2
B2	Segregation		0
C	Equality/Diversity		2
D1	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell		2
D2	Incentives and earned privileges		0
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions		2
E2	Resettlement		1
E3	Mail		1
E4	Pin Phones		1
F	Food and kitchens		3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care		3
H1	Property related to previous prison		10
H2	Property related to Morton Hall		7
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)		4
I1	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates		4
I3	Sentence related - immigration		8
14	Sentence related - recategorisation		3
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying		9
K	Transfers		1
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints		10
	Total number of applications	N/A	74

Note that applications and responses are made in the English language. Translation facilities are available for use in discussion but these have not been used as English is commonly spoken or, with their agreement, prisoner's colleagues interpret for them.

Appendix 4

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	11
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	225
Total number of shifts on the 0800telephone line*	Nil
Total number of segregation reviews attended	5



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