

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

**For reporting year  
01 April 2021 – 31 March 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.

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

HMP Aylesbury began this reporting year designated as a young offender institution (YOI), taking 18- to 21-year-old prisoners. It then began to take in prisoners up to the age of 27. It then changed to Aylesbury HMP/YOI.

Aylesbury has a mixture of buildings, from Victorian to early 21st century. The seven residential units are of differing sizes and ages. An ongoing refurbishment programme for four of these blocks was completed in this reporting year.

The three oldest wings are modernised, but of traditional Victorian pattern. The two next oldest wings, from approximately the 1930s, were modernised over 20 years ago. The two newest date from 1997.

The care and separation unit (CSU) – or segregation unit ('seg') – is 10 years old. A modern healthcare building, including the reception unit, is also 10 years old. There is a modern, well-equipped gym.

Government Facilities Services Limited (GFSL) holds the contract for maintenance of the prison fabric. Practice Plus provides the healthcare.

In this reporting year Aylesbury was part of the long term and high security estate (LTHSE), with some of the longest-sentenced young adult males in the English prison system. They are some of the most disruptive and challenging young men in prison. For this reporting period, their sentences ranged from four years to life. Prisoners are taken in from most of England and Wales.

Some of the prisoners began their sentences at other YOIs or secure institutions for children under 18.

The prison is not designed as a resettlement prison but 24 prisoners left custody directly from Aylesbury in this reporting year.

New prisoners continued to arrive throughout this year. From October 2021, category C prisoners, over 21 years of age and up to 27, arrived. This trend went on. Prisoners who came in as young offenders, if categorised as category C at 21, could stay in Aylesbury and not be transferred. This was often unpopular with prisoners who looked forward to a possible move and a fresh start at 21.

The total number of prisoners held ranged from 209 at the start of the year to 371 (full occupancy: 402 prisoners, when fully operational). Target staffing levels stayed the same. There are now approximately 340 prisoners. The legacy of Covid continues to disrupt the normal functioning of the courts and ease of movement of prisoners between prisons.

The modernisation of residential blocks began in late 2019 to early 2020. As the reporting year unfolded, all wings became progressively fully operational again. All the cells are now designed for single occupancy. Refurbished cells, a new shower block and a modernised servery in each completed wing made this accommodation cleaner and more comfortable.

These material improvements supported a reset in the quality of provision for the prisoners. It also underpinned a positive move out of special measures.

The senior management team stayed fairly stable through the year; staffing at other levels did not. By the end of the reporting year, the shortage of officers in all bands, and the shortage of operational support grade staff (OSGs), had a negative effect on all aspects of the prison regime.

The day-to-day regime at Aylesbury normally mirrors that of similar prisons. Together with the rest of the country, Covid dominated prison life for management, staff and prisoners for roughly half of this reporting year. The prison operated under Gold Command – off-site, centralised authority, with overall strategic command – during this period. Almost every section of this report reflects this.

The prison performed well in terms of Covid infections. Staff suffered some disruptions in spring 2021 but there were few cases amongst prisoners. Prisoner infection was well controlled, despite only about 30% of prisoners being vaccinated, but this came at the expense of prisoners' freedoms and activities. Prison staff did their best to encourage take-up of vaccinations, with little success.

Prisoners' ages were a positive factor. Embedding testing and essential protective protocols amongst wing staff took consistent effort on behalf of management but eventually were well observed.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

The Covid-19 outbreak had a significant impact on the prison, prisoner life, regime, activities and staff. The Board tried to cover as much ground as it could in these difficult circumstances. In some areas there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

Overall, the prison appears to be reasonably safe. There were no deaths in custody during the reporting year.

Wings vary in size: they have 63, 65, 59, 49, 72, 47 and 47 cells. The sizes allow the officers to have good oversight.

The safer prisons team track and try to manage prisoners with known issues, using the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) and challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) 'tools' (see section 4), as well as reports from officers.

There is an issue with gang culture. This is made worse by the ages of the prisoners and is behind much of the violence that happens. The prison has a violence reduction strategy and a gang strategy to address this. There were fewer chances for violence during the pandemic, with prisoners locked up for much of the time.

Fairly or unfairly, Aylesbury has traditionally had a reputation for violence, as a member of the LTHSE catering only for prisoners from 18 to 21 years old. This reputation continues and needs to be addressed as the prison transitions to a category C establishment.

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

We know that prisoners often feel that they have been unfairly, even sometimes inhumanely, treated. Quite a large proportion of them are black, or from ethnic minority backgrounds. A large proportion are Muslims. There are prisoners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and 'other white' ethnic minority groups who typically face disadvantages and particular challenges in life.

There has sometimes been a clash of cultures, as the cultural and religious backgrounds of wing officers and other staff members have not generally mirrored those of the prisoners.

Ignorance of religious sensibilities – to do with food, or handling of religious items – has caused occasional problems. Sometimes – as prisoners may also be traumatised, or suffering from mental or developmental conditions, which may not be diagnosed or known about – simple throwaway remarks, or jokes, can be taken the wrong way.

Staff throughout the prison work hard to make sure that such issues are understood, especially by wing officers, who have to deal closely with prisoners (who can be hard to handle) every day.

Managers supported the work of the equalities action team, who analysed many aspects of interactions with prisoners, to try to improve matters. There was input from the psychology department, and more and better staff training.

There was much more consultation with the prisoners during the year, about how they felt, and what they would like, on many matters affecting them.

We saw great efforts made by some staff to treat prisoners fairly and humanely. Small but important gestures often eased tensions; one staff member won the Ministry of Justice's Humanity award.

Managers have tried to recruit staff from a wide variety of backgrounds, with some success. Generally, staff recruitment and retention has been very difficult, and that, together with the pandemic, has limited progress in this area.

The refurbishment programme that was completed in 2021 means that the showers and other wing amenities are in a reasonable state.

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

Predictably, Covid restrictions impacted both health and wellbeing throughout the year. There were Covid cases within the prison, but we observed that the prison contained Covid successfully by vigilant maintenance of Covid protocols. These protocols limited the daily regime of the prison and activities for prisoners to an extreme extent. It became the norm for prisoners to remain in their cells for up to 22 or even 23 hours a day. We recognise that prison staff worked hard through this difficult time, ensuring that prisoners usually got some time outside and a daily shower.

### ***Health***

Within the given constraints, health provision was maintained and, at times when it was possible, face-to-face appointments with both GP and dentist were available. Access to medicines was maintained on a regular basis. We observed little problem with this. The health team focused hard on trying to persuade the prisoners to have Covid vaccinations. This was a time-consuming task; the young prisoners were not keen to comply. Only about 30–35% were vaccinated, despite three separate campaigns. Health advice for prisoners was provided via written materials and via their in-cell phones. Given the inactivity of prisoners on a daily basis, sleep patterns became even more disturbed than is usual. The health team was understandably keen not to increase the distribution of sleeping drugs. They created some innovative materials for the prisoners on how to maintain sleep hygiene even in difficult circumstances.

### ***Wellbeing***

The extreme reduction in activity militated against the wellbeing of the young prisoners, and their mental and physical health deteriorated. At the same time, for some of the young prisoners, the predictability of the regime, and the reduction in social mixing in the prison, which can raise anxiety in some, meant that they were not as badly affected as we might have expected. Further, the Covid restrictions led to a significant reduction in violence between prisoners and by prisoners on staff and this also helped to alleviate the worst effects of the Covid restrictions.

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

In the first part of the reporting year, Covid limited all services which make successful transfer and resettlement of prisoners possible. Some transfers continued, subject to quarantining.

The prison kept up some essential support for vulnerable or priority prisoners, especially for those close to the end of their sentence. This included programmes, as well as other specialist psychology services, such as Pathways.

Access to wings for specialist staff from education, psychology and elsewhere was strictly controlled. In-cell telephones allowed essential staff-prisoner contact but were unsuitable for sensitive service delivery to the most vulnerable. Printed in-cell packs were often used.

Milton Keynes College (MKC) is the main education services provider. Education provision was patchy throughout the year.

By the beginning of the reporting year, MKC had adapted provision to meet Covid restrictions. This meant limited face-to-face contact, a narrowed curriculum, and small numbers of learners. Some small classes took place on the wings. Staff provided prisoners with workbooks in different subjects. They taught practical subjects, such as horticulture, only as paper exercises. Unfortunately, there was no link with the few prisoners on the gardening team at that time.

Education induction, measuring new arrivals' abilities, continued, but on a reduced basis, on paper only. In September 2021, off-wing education began to re-open. MKC staff then had to rerun all these initial tests using an online system. Unfortunately, this digital system failed. Face-to-face education then closed again because of Covid. Apart from in-cell packs, it had not restarted by the end of the reporting year. The few prisoners following certificated distance education, for example A levels or Open University courses, had the strongest, most consistent, support, despite all the constraints on staff and prisoner movement.

Prisoners released from Aylesbury in the year were poorly prepared and supported. Third sector agencies were active in the prison to prepare prisoners for release, including Forward Trust and a mentoring specialist employed by the Central Financing Organisation (CF03 – the delivery agent for an EU-funded project which was about to end). The Forward Trust career specialist co-ordinated well with the reducing reoffending team.

The overall provision was thin and wholly insufficient to support the 24 prisoners released directly from Aylesbury prison this year.

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

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

- Deliver a robust, imaginative and flexible new recruitment strategy across the prison estate, backed by the resources needed to increase and sustain higher staffing levels.
- Despite current uncertainties in public finances, fight to secure investment in the reduction of reoffending to meet the ambition of the Prison Strategy White Paper (December 2021). (The 2021-22 spending review specifies £500 million over the next three years will be allocated to this area.) Keep access to quality education, and skills development, at the heart of this investment.
- Reduce the number of seriously mentally ill people being held in prison; ensure a greater number of emergency mental health beds are available for prisoners in extreme need.

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

- Improve forward planning, consultation and support to senior staff when prisons are required to house new categories of prisoner.
- Set tough targets, and appropriate penalties, in third party contracts for education, training and vocational skills delivery. Maintain business-like contract management to optimise delivery.

- Systematically tackle low levels of staffing. Reconsider the value of local recruitment to lower bands in the prison service.
- Re-establish the key worker scheme to ensure prisoners have specific individual officers allocated to them, who will take time to mentor and provide guidance.

## **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- Set out a clear vision for the prison which puts improvement in prisoner outcomes first; build on the strong interdepartmental co-operation existing in the prison to realise this vision.
- Embed a greater ethos of celebrating success and sharing positive behaviours and outcomes for prisoners through communications and activities with staff and prisoners alike.
- Respond to the changing prisoner population in Aylesbury. Put in place a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the needs of category C prisoners are met appropriately alongside the slightly different needs of the young offenders. Is there a greater role for third sector agencies to help with this?
- Improve the quality and quantity of purposeful activities and workshops.

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

Covid made many things difficult, or impossible, during this year. It was unrealistic to expect the senior leadership team (SLT) to respond to, and take action on, all the issues we mentioned in the last report.

There are, though, some we would highlight:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Action</b>
More co-operation between prison departments to improve prisoner outcomes	-	More multidisciplinary groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long-sentenced young adults meeting</li> </ul>
Celebrate prisoners' achievements more publicly	-	Prisoner newsletter now covers this more regularly, though there is a way to go
Reduce interpersonal threats and disagreements (non-associates), to get prison life to work better	-	Engagement of third-party mediation service to train staff promised
Training in professional mediation techniques to curtail influence of gang culture	-	Strategy to tackle the influence of gangs in the prison was delivered but action on this not evident
Foreign prisoners rarely told officers of problems with (especially written) English language; little if any help was available	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction officers made efforts to check prisoners' language levels</li> <li>• Register of staff with language skills was updated and the register publicised to staff</li> </ul>

No use was made of the prison service's telephonic translation service	-	The service was more widely publicised to staff
Induction information was available only in English	-	Diversity and inclusion staff started work on preparing some basic information materials in other languages
Limited staff awareness of different religious/cultural sensibilities, for example prisoners reported inappropriate handling of Korans during searches with dogs	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training was prepared, and given</li> <li>• Staff were invited to an Eid meal</li> </ul>
The clarity of written communications with prisoners was improving, but this was inconsistent	-	Communications officer role was established, with improved oversight of notices and signs, but has now lapsed
Lack of trust in prison complaints systems, such as handling of discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs)	-	Third party engaged to check and improve procedures

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

The ongoing pandemic put pressure on all prison staff to ensure prisoners were kept safe. Most prisoners lost the chance to work, and all had very little chance to socialise other than in their designated 'bubbles'. Officers had to put a human face on a much reduced regime (programme of activities for prisoners). Management had an ongoing set of challenges to deal with.

Access to the prison and direct communication with prisoners had to be limited.

We could contact prisoners on their in-cell phones when we were in the prison. As time went on, prisoners began to unplug these phones during working hours in order to stop prison departments, and ourselves, from contacting them.

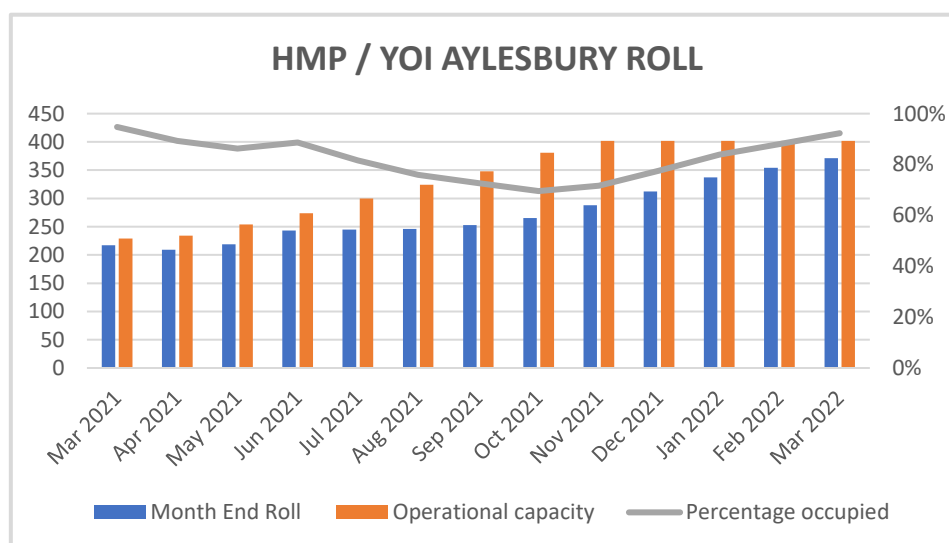
The safer custody team continued to operate throughout. Their access to the prisoners was also restricted.

When there were outbreaks of Covid, prison staff took great care to isolate these to individual wings. They tested staff and prisoners to try to stop the disease spreading. In general, this was successful: outbreaks that did happen were kept within single wings, or within wing bubbles.

The control and level of confinement caused by the pandemic did mean that there were fewer chances for prisoners to initiate or get involved in violence across the prison.

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

Aylesbury had about 400 prisoners until it was put into special measures (May 2019). Numbers were then halved (the decant).



The old wings have been gradually refurbished, so Aylesbury could take more prisoners from the start of this reporting year. The aim was to get numbers back to about 400.

The prison recruited no extra staff, which concerned us greatly. The original plan was to return to a full prison with an associated uplift in staff-prisoner ratio (see section 5.3, Staff).

During the pandemic, some prisoners arrived each week. As last year, they spent some time on a quarantine wing, in small groups, in cells next to each other. They had Covid tests on arrival and before moving to new wings. We commend prison staff for their excellent organisation, which kept the new arrivals safe and, mainly, Covid-free.

New prisoners came in GeoAmey, or Serco, vans. On arrival, they went to the reception area, then to healthcare. Covid gave us few chances to inspect the vans or monitor inductions this year. Last year, we noted that the generally clean vans had small individual compartments, with hard seats and a small window, with prisoners' property in a separate compartment. Comfort stops were made during long journeys.

Dedicated search team staff searched new prisoners, using metal detectors and the full body scanner, and their property, using metal detectors. Depending on availability, they also used the prison's dedicated sniffer dogs. They gave any prisoners secreting items within their bodies the chance to admit this and hand over the item, as an amnesty with no charges. Otherwise, following a secreted items policy, these prisoners went to a cell in the segregation unit until they passed the item.

If prisoners had more property with them than was allowed, or items which Aylesbury did not allow them to have (there is some variety in what prisons permit – see section 5.8, Property), these were noted and stored.

Staff explained rules about property, use of in-cell phones, booking virtual visits, and more. Healthcare weighed, measured, and checked all new arrivals.

An induction officer then interviewed them and noted important information such as mental or physical health issues, language abilities, religion and dietary requirements, and gang affiliations. They then circulated this information to relevant departments. The reception orderly, who is a trusted prisoner, briefed new arrivals about the regime and took questions about the prison environment.

Although we know that prisoners may be too traumatised, or just too wary, to admit to difficulties such as poor reading or writing skills, it was very helpful to have such information available early on in the prisoner 'journey'. We, and other departments, could then look out for problems, and quickly point prisoners in the right direction to get help.

This year, induction officers recorded information about the language abilities of foreign prisoners more consistently. However, occasionally, some serious difficulties were still missed, and wing staff did not pick them up quickly, or at all.

Any special needs prisoners mentioned were noted. Specialists from across the prison reviewed these prisoners' needs weekly. As with last year, we noted some

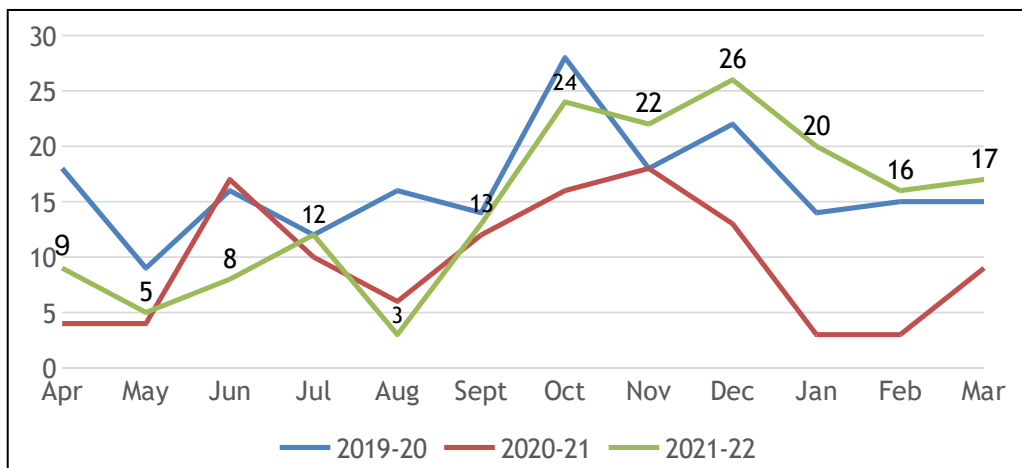
poor follow-through by wing officers, especially newer ones, with, for example, CSIP recommendations (see section 4.3) not always known about. The safety intervention meeting (SIM) has worked to improve this. Occasionally, the inadequate IT system also slowed down this important information-sharing. Health staff were not connected to the main IT platforms, making the exchange of information with healthcare staff about vulnerable prisoners particularly onerous.

Covid meant that there was no peer support system for new prisoners. Staff on the quarantine wings gave first night support. Other established induction systems, such as screening prisoners' educational skills, were reduced.

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

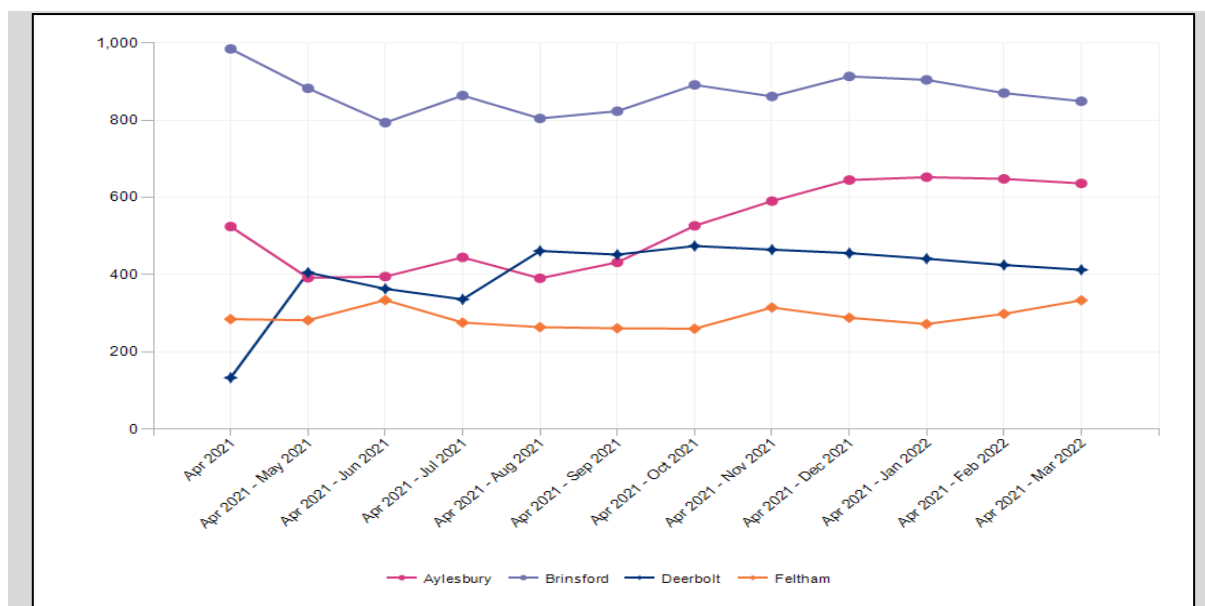
### 4.2.1 Self-harm

There were 175 reported incidents of self-harm during the year (last year: 115). The worst period was August to December 2021.



[1] Self-harm incidents per month

Self-harm during that period increased more sharply than at other similar prisons.



[2] Relative rates of self-harm in YOIs

Covid limited prisoners' activities. When restrictions were about to be removed (May 2022), some prisoners felt more uncertainty, even anxiety: this may be partly why more self-harmed then. Last year, one prisoner was the most prolific self-harmer; this year, it was spread more widely.

Staff used the prison service's ACCT tool to manage prisoners at risk of suicide/self-harm. The total number of days on ACCT were over 50% more than last year.

ACCTs	Current year	Last year
<b>Number of ACCTs</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>79</b>
Number of prisoners on ACCTs	46	43
Maximum number of ACCTs opened for any one prisoner	9 (2 had 8 each)	9
Most continuous days for any one prisoner	146	95
Greatest total number of days for any one prisoner	<b>335</b>	-
Month with the most days when ACCTs were open	November 2021: 517 days	-
<b>Total days with open ACCTs</b>	<b>2,193</b>	1,349

**increased 50+%**

Any staff member or member of any partner organisation working in the prison, including the IMB, could trigger the opening of an ACCT.

For prisoners on ACCTs, staff have to take certain actions proven to lower the risk of suicide and self-harm. They developed strategies for dealing with these prisoners. ACCT documents were kept up to date and moved around the prison with the prisoner.

All ACCTs were audited when they were closed. Prison staff did not hesitate to use the process or try to close ACCTs too early.

We support the use of this valuable process. (Covid limited our access to ACCT paperwork.)

With all prisoners now in single cells, and very little moving around due to the pandemic, there was less tension and violence. They could be on their own for long periods; this could increase anxiety and lead to more self-harm.

Prisoners' in-cell phones were helpful – calls to Samaritans were free, and calls to named friends and family were at a reasonable rate – but many unplugged them, when not in use, to avoid disturbance.

There was no Listener service – peer support from Samaritan-trained prisoners – this year. In-person visits were very limited. Social video calls continued but were less popular. At first, the security controls were set to be too easily triggered, though this was changed.

#### **4.2.2 Deaths in custody**

There were no deaths in custody. Reports and recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) on the two (self-inflicted) deaths during the previous reporting year became available.

*These are notes from the PPO on self-inflicted deaths which took place in the previous reporting year.*

In May 2020, a prisoner on a life sentence was moved to Aylesbury from another prison, where he had been with a close family member. He had firmly stated that he would self-harm if moved. He was referred to safer custody and mental health teams on arrival and seemed settled during his quarantine period. He then chose not to come out of his cell and was, very sadly, found dead.

The PPO initial report (November 2020) recommended that:

- Staff should have 'meaningful contact' with prisoners after their quarantine period, and start ACCT procedures 'when necessary'.

- Staff should be ‘made aware of and understand’ their responsibilities during medical emergencies, including starting basic life support promptly, and calling an ambulance as soon as an emergency code is broadcast.

The PPO also recommended that staff at the previous prison should consider family ties when arranging transfers and noted information-sharing between the prisons as a concern. They quoted the 2018-19 IMB report, which noted a 50% increase in self-harm compared to the previous year.

In January 2021 a socially isolated young prisoner with a complex mental health history was found dead in his cell. The PPO final report (March 2022) commended staff for their care and support. They found no evidence that anyone could have foreseen that this prisoner was an imminent suicide risk. They noted staff’s difficulty with an emergency cell key, and a slight delay in calling for an ambulance.

The report recommended that:

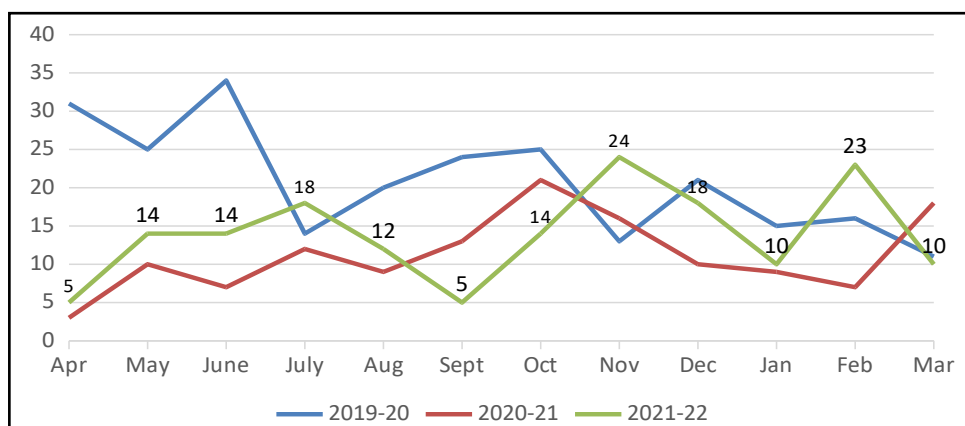
- There should be training for support staff who may need to use such keys.
- The Governor should report to the Ombudsman all ‘emergency code’ responses for a period of three months.

The prison’s senior leadership team accepted these recommendations. Covid prevented the IMB from following up closely. We are very saddened by the deaths of these young men, but have no concerns, or comments, to add to these thorough investigations. We repeat that all staff were very stretched during Covid, making everything harder.

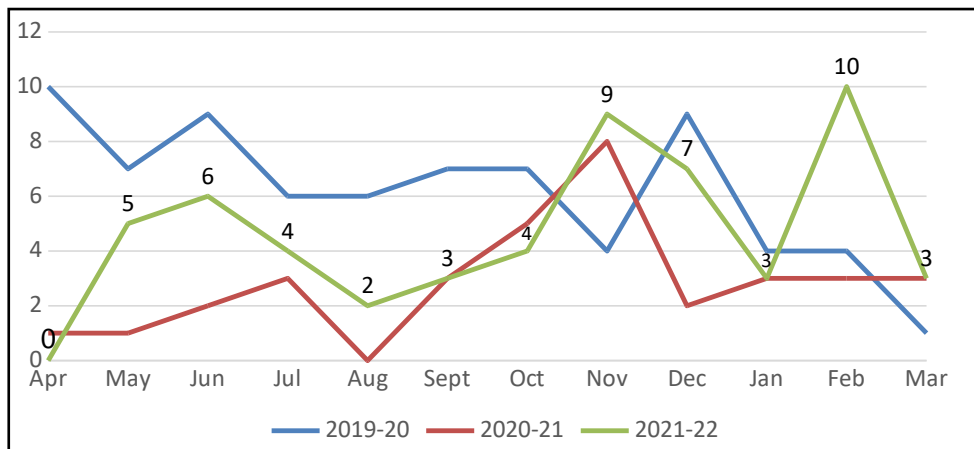
### 4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Because of Covid restrictions, prisoners on each wing were divided into two or three bubbles. Most spent about 22.5 hours every day in their cells. They came out for showers, exercise and to collect meals, within their bubbles.

There was limited interaction and movement on and between wings, as well as out-of-cell activities. There was less education and few work activities. This artificially calmer state meant fewer opportunities for violence. There were 167 violent incidents in total. Incidents often included assaults on staff as well as prisoners.

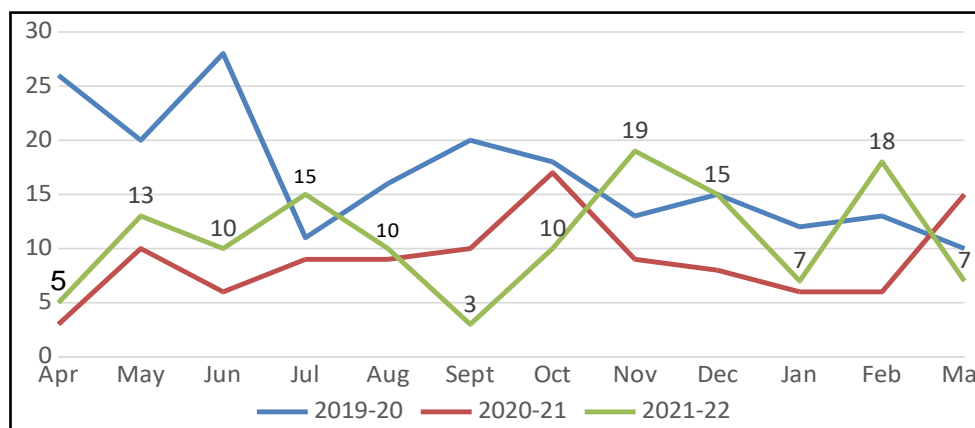


Assaults against staff were up by 64%, to 56 (last year: 34):

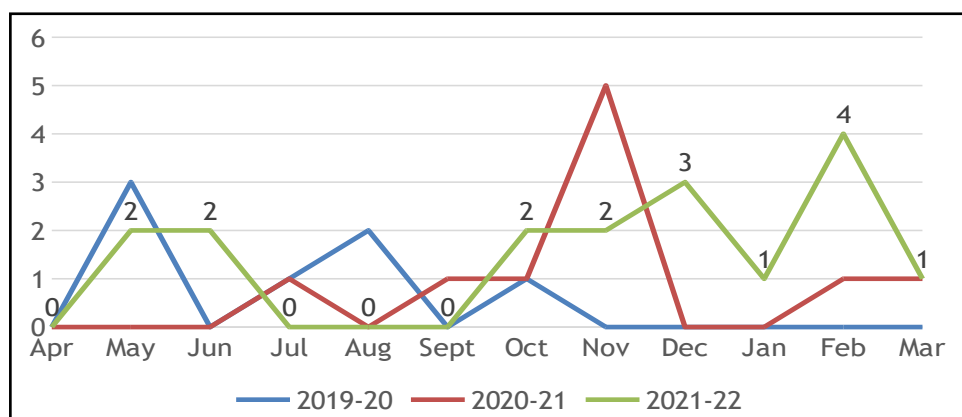


Fourteen incidents were serious (two last year). This steep rise may be taken to be statistically unimportant because of the low numbers.

Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 18% to 132 (108 last year):



Serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults were up by 70% to 17 (10 last year):



Frustration for these young, fit men, who were locked up for most of the day with little to do, was likely to be one reason for this level of violence.

The prison had a zero-tolerance attitude to violence. Staff worked on identifying and recording gang-related activity, which was often a cause. The arrival of new prisoners sometimes created conflict: establishing their places in the existing hierarchy could lead to bullying.

The CSIP procedure, from May 2019, was supported by the weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM). The multidisciplinary team reviewed the case of each CSIP prisoner, identifying means to help them control violent tendencies. This also helped wing staff to recognise prisoners' triggers, and so avoid unnecessary confrontations. Vulnerable prisoners' cases were also discussed.

This year, custody managers (CMs) nominated prisoners directly for the CSIP programme (previously, this was subject to review by the SIM). There were often over 20 prisoners on the programme – more than the prison had the resources to help. Covid had already made the programme difficult to deliver. It limited the number of places on Pathway courses, as well as staff's access to the prisoners, needed so they could work with them.

The list of CSIP prisoners grew ever longer. CMs and others often did not provide the required weekly updates. The programme almost ground to a halt and lost some of its effectiveness.

There was no follow-up to last year's report on the usefulness of the CSIP programme. We hope there will be one again in future.

As far as Covid permitted us to judge, prison staff managed serious incidents effectively. We expect to see more work on understanding gangs, and mediation, post-Covid, which should lead to good results.

Wings benefitted from having safer prisons, and other, wing representatives, and some wing meetings took place. There was generally much more consultation with the prisoners – they were asked about what they wanted in many situations, rather than passively having things done to them.

Although limited by the pandemic, this was a positive trend which should pay off in the long term, as prisoners develop more trust in, and engagement with, the system. It should also help them to feel more safe in the prison.

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

##### ***Incident totals***

**Incident totals** (Some anomalies in figures, due to occasional splitting of individual reports)

Apr 2021	14
May 2021	49
Jun 2021	51
Jul 2021	41
Aug 2021	43
Sep 2021	18
Oct 2021	51
Nov 2021	62
Dec 2021	68
Jan 2022	1
Feb 2022	81
Mar 2022	27

The table below shows the use of batons and PAVA. The use of PAVA looked high to the IMB, though every single incident had been reported appropriately to HMPPS and had not been queried.

We asked the IMB Secretariat for guidance on this. A comparison was made with a prison holding a similar profile of prisoners, and Aylesbury numbers did indeed seem high. Late in the year HMPPS picked up on the frequency of use and followed up with a visit to Aylesbury, and a deeper analysis of use of force practices.

	Batons drawn only	Batons used	PAVA drawn only	PAVA used
Apr 2021	1	0	0	0
May 2021	0	0	1	11
Jun 2021	0	4	1	19
Jul 2021	0	1	0	0
Aug 2021	0	0	0	8
Sep 2021	0	0	0	5
Oct 2021	2	0	2	4
Nov 2021	1	0	1	13
Dec 2021	1	5	0	13
Jan 2022	0	0	0	0
Feb 2022	2	5	2	22
Mar 2022	0	3	0	0

#### 4.5 Preventing illicit items

Within the reporting period, Aylesbury had strong controls preventing illicit items entering the prison. A body scanner arrived, allowing all new prisoners to be scanned on arrival. There were occasional instances of hooch being brewed and one kitchen team lost their jobs over such an event.

Unfortunately, the longer, more intense, treatment and support to combat addiction could not be delivered. The drugs and alcohol recovery team (DART) responsible for

treatment of addicted prisoners offered what training and support it could through workbooks and in-cell telephone calls.

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

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

As noted elsewhere in this report, before this year, the prison had been operating with a reduced population of about 220 prisoners: 55% of normal operational capacity. Three wings (on a rolling basis) out of seven were closed for refurbishment at any one time. Refurbishment projects continued on A and E wings, awarded to Amey; C wing, awarded to Paragon; and then B and D wings, also Paragon, as other wings became available. Varying levels of refurbishment were agreed. Work was done on showers and ventilation systems, serveries, replacement floors, and call and fire alarm systems. There was a paint through and new furniture.

The plumbing and drainage systems were not upgraded, owing to budgetary constraints. Decisions like this can often be false economies, leaving more work to do in the future and multiplying potential disruption.

All cells have in-cell telephones, allowing prisoners to dial pre-approved numbers. This has been an enormous success, especially during Covid. We hope the wiring will be suitable for the planned roll-out of IT terminals in future years, a step we understand is part of HMPPS policy.

Overall, the work gives a good impression. Wings look brighter and fresher. Staff and prisoners welcome the improved environment. This has led to more respect for the facilities by the prisoners. Some teething problems occurred, for example flooding in showers, but these were resolved. Some defects have already come to light, including the paintwork on A and C wings, where there is already significant wear and peeling.

Other issues, unrelated to the refurbishment, included storm damage to a TV aerial, which unaccountably took several months to repair, and storm damage to the roof in the segregation unit, which was repaired more swiftly. Some wings suffer repeated problems with the hot water supply.

As the refurbished wings started to be used following this work, the prison gradually bought equipment for use during structured activities (previously called association) for each wing. This equipment was slow to arrive: it included table tennis tables, very small pool tables, televisions and games consoles and chess boards.

We had three complaints about the food, while the prison had 11. It seems the food is generally acceptable to this young group, though they say they never have enough.

Some mistakes were made by the kitchens, with dietary issues being the main cause for complaint, especially by Muslim prisoners during Ramadan. This is a concern. No issues were raised about prison-issue clothing.

## 5.2 Segregation

The prison placed disruptive prisoners, and certain others, in the segregation unit (also called the care and separation unit), often after incidents such as fights or assaults. Some prisoners spent between three and 10 days in cellular confinement following adjudication after some bad behaviour. It is not recommended for prisoners on an ACCT to be placed in segregation, but on the very few occasions that this happened staff diligently maintained the ACCT observations.

Some prisoners in the segregation unit were there because their behaviour on the wing caused problems (known as GOoD – good order or discipline). Often they had ‘non-associates’ on the wings, other prisoners they had to avoid, perhaps because of gang affiliations or previous incidents. These prisoners stayed on the segregation unit until staff could ease them back on to wings or find alternative prisons for them.

Staff tried to keep prisoners there for the shortest possible time. This was not easy: a few stayed for quite long periods. Certain prisoners actually preferred being in the unit as they felt safer there than on the wings. Neurodiverse prisoners, for example, who were particularly sensitive to noise, often preferred it, as it was usually quieter than the wings.

When there were no suitable places within the prison, officers looked for places in other prisons, or specialist units. Even when moves were agreed, they could be held up for many reasons, including lack of available transport. Sometimes, the prison made its own, more expensive, transport arrangements. All this tied up staff for large amounts of time.

A place on a specialist unit was found for one long-sentenced prisoner with mental health issues. Officers and offender management staff devoted time and energy to supporting him towards this transition, recognising that transitions are difficult for people with mental health conditions. Everything, including transport, was arranged, but suddenly the unit refused to accept him. This episode caused stress for the staff as well as the prisoner.

The IMB managed to complete weekly rounds almost throughout the Covid restrictions, speaking to each prisoner face to face, usually within hearing of accompanying officers. When staff were available to accompany us, we had conversations with cell doors open; otherwise, we communicated through closed doors, which was not completely satisfactory.

Officers and others reviewed all the segregated prisoners regularly. The IMB either went in person, or phoned in on a conference line, to several reviews every week. Acoustics sometimes made phoning in unsatisfactory. Governors conducted reviews well, encouraging prisoners to express themselves, and giving them sensible guidance.

Most prisoners appeared cheerful, and were well looked after. They had regular showers, and exercised in the clean yards. Some could spend time in the yard with a fellow prisoner, if they were friends and behaving well. We often had better, and more private, conversations with prisoners on the yard. The only access for these

prisoners to a confidential telephone was outside. Prisoners went outside in all weathers to exercise and make calls from the yard phones. One phone seemed to be regularly out of order and took time to get fixed. This caused the prisoners irritation and anxiety.

The unit was in good physical condition. The cells could be cold in winter, but prisoners could ask for extra blankets. Those on GOoD normally had TVs and radios in their cells, and occasional access to a pleasant TV room. A few cleaning jobs were available. Some prisoners spent time reading. They could borrow books from the unit's small library. They could also ask for books from the main library, but few were encouraged to do this. The education department could deliver workbooks for any prisoner in the unit, but in effect only those few doing distance learning, for example, Open University and A levels, continued with education whilst there.

The staff were professional, and liaised well with us, despite being usually very busy. The constantly changing clientele generated a lot of paperwork, but they kept on top of it. They knew the prisoners well and dealt with them appropriately and sympathetically. Staff-prisoner relationships were normally good. Some prisoners could be difficult to deal with. When dealing with particularly challenging prisoners, officers wore special protective clothing when opening their cell doors, and more than one officer could be required for unlock. Perhaps surprisingly, since the unit is to an extent a place for punishment (in the form of segregation), the atmosphere was generally both pleasant and purposeful.

### 5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

Prisoner numbers slowly went up during the year. No extra staff were employed. The staffing situation seriously limited prisoners' activities this year, to a worrying extent. This table shows the serious effect of the staff shortage on day-to-day life in the prison.

	<b><i>Covid stage</i></b> <b><i>1 = activities somewhat limited</i></b> <b><i>2 = limited</i></b> <b><i>3/4 = very limited</i></b>	<b>Prisoner numbers</b>	<b>Band 3 officers: 131</b> <b>Band 2 OSGs (support staff): 52</b>
<b>April 2021</b>	'Covid well controlled'	209	50 staff short
<b>May</b>	-	219	-
<b>June</b>	<b>3</b> on-wing 'bubbles': exercise, showers; off-wing: essential jobs (kitchen+)	243	-
<b>July</b>	<b>1</b>	245	19 off
<b>Aug</b>	-	246	30 off 'Institution under pressure'

<b>Sept</b>	<b>2</b> 1 bubble (per wing) for off-wing activities; some activities re-started 23.9.21 -> <b>3 / 4</b>	253	9 off (Covid)
<b>Oct</b>	<b>2</b>	265	-
<b>Nov</b>	<b>1</b>	288	48 off
<b>Dec</b>	<b>3 ...</b>  '... due to the staff absence rate and the ability for us to provide predictable, decent and safe regimes'	312	24 off (Covid-related)  Officers covering OSGs' tasks.  'The more we take in, the less we can do.'
<b>Jan 2022</b>	<b>3</b>	337	48 officers off 62% OSGs available  'spread so thin'
<b>Feb</b>	<b>3</b>	354	20+ off (Covid)
<b>March</b>	<b>2</b>	371	33 staff off sick, 10 at college 'Hard to ensure showers and exercise for all.'

Four to six staff left each month in 2021, often centrally recruited staff, appointed to Aylesbury despite its distance from their homes. Managers tried hard to recruit and retain staff, and a small team, including a new HR person, went to local job fairs. They focused on staff wellbeing, with team-building events, staff breakfasts (some with the Governor), better mentoring for new staff, and a new coffee room.

Staff planned, and regularly communicated to the prisoners, the necessary changes to daily activities, or regime, due to Covid or staff shortages.

Thirty-nine percent of Band 3 officers and 30% of OSGs had less than three years' experience. Some prisoners could be difficult to handle. The 'no vaping on the yard' rule, and, during lockdown, being let out only for showers and exercise, frustrated them on occasion. Officers' inexperience contributed to a big fight when prisoners were let out of showers early.

Certain officers showed great patience and understanding with challenging prisoners; some:

- nipped issues in the bud, encouraging prisoners to think of the wing as their home
- helped prisoners to get books/educational materials
- encouraged prisoners to apply for jobs.

Some failed to flag up problems, feeling the SLT didn't listen to them; a number had mental health issues themselves. The key worker system was limited mainly to prisoners likely to self-harm, and then abandoned altogether due to staff shortages.

Lockdown helped develop some positive staff/prisoner relationships. Six staff were nominated for national awards; one won the Ministry of Justice's Humanity award.

Small but important gestures eased tensions during lockdown: the prison organised photos of prisoners who wanted them to be taken, for sending to their families. Prisoners were increasingly consulted about what they wanted.

#### 5.4 Equality and diversity

This prison has disproportionately more black, Asian and minority ethnic, and Muslim, prisoners than in society outside. A passionate equalities action team, consisting of a senior leader, manager and officer, regularly reviewed these prisoners' treatment at meetings with staff from across the prison, including the Governor. They produced statistics and highly detailed reports.

New diversity and inclusion prisoner representatives presented prisoners' views at forums and meetings, giving feedback on, for example, the incentives policy (IP) rewards scheme.

Dec. 2021 <b><u>Ethnicity</u></b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Complaints</b>	<b>IP 'Enhanced'</b>	<b>IP 'Standard'</b>
Black <i>Black, Asian and minority ethnic</i>	38.50% 71.40%	34.70%	33.30%	48.40%
White	25.90%	20.80%	32.60%	14.50%
<b><u>Religion</u></b>				
Christian	42.00%	25.00%	48.80%	25.80%
Muslim	34.10%	51.40%	28.70%	41.90%

The team analysed negative reports from black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners on:

- staff/prisoner relationships
- use of force
- discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs)

The diversity and inclusion policy and action plan detailed needed improvements. Team members investigated gangs: 98 prisoners had gang affiliations (78% black, Asian and minority ethnic, 18% white). An independent charity, the Zahid Mubarak Trust, scrutinised handling of DIRFs.

Shared induction information, and an induction wing office whiteboard, identified prisoners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, physical and mental health issues, and foreign nationals, who might need extra help. A list of foreign language-speaking staff was updated; we do not know how often officers used this. Most were unaware of the prison's access to the translation service, The Big Word. We met and helped prisoners who slipped through these nets. There was a prevailing attitude that the non-English speakers would manage. But for them the first weeks in the prison can be unnecessarily bewildering.

Filling in necessary paper forms to get support disadvantaged foreign and less literate (or illiterate) prisoners. Prisoners and officers sometimes helped informally. Some prisoners volunteered to train to teach reading, under the Shannon Trust scheme. In-cell phones gave free access to pre-cleared helplines.

Signs and notices were made increasingly clear. A communications officer circulated information for prisoners via an internal TV channel and newsletters, occasionally, but unfortunately not regularly, with prisoners' contributions. Articles and events for prisoners and staff followed a diversity calendar, covering LGBTQ+, learning disabilities, autism, and more.

There were 144 prisoners (60%) who enjoyed carnival-themed Black History Month activities and food. There was a good atmosphere but the activities designed by, and for, prisoners could have been more ambitious.

An Irish traveller prisoner described his life in a newsletter during Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. Another prisoner won an artwork prize for World Religion Day.

Disabled people's facilities included an accessible cell, lift, ramps, and hearing loop in the visits room, and facilities for those with mobility difficulties. There were no transgender prisoners. There was a single point of contact.

Commitment to continue to improve diversity and inclusion from the top down was clear.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

A Muslim chaplain managed a team of 12 paid chaplains, supported by 28 volunteers and an administration assistant. Covid greatly restricted volunteers' access to the prison this year. There were also three Official Prison Visitors.

Chaplains were fully involved in the prison's activities, attending management meetings and reviews of prisoners' behaviour. Managers encouraged officers to consult chaplains about complaints alleging discrimination.

The managing chaplain gave 84 new staff friendly and informative induction sessions and provided online faith awareness training.

The team worked with the 83% of prisoners who followed various faiths and the 17% who had none. These were mainly Muslim and Christian, and also Hindu, Sikh, Bahá'í, Buddhist, and Pagan.

Faith	Prisoners of this faith		Last year	
Muslim	73	37%	62	57%
Christian <i>includes C of E, RC, Pentecostal, and some others</i>	80	40%	95	45%

Chaplains visited or spoke via the in-cell phone to 345 new arrivals, checking that faith details on the prison's computer system were correct. They made follow-up visits or calls soon afterwards, giving new prisoners copies of their own clear, induction booklet.

The team continued regular contact with prisoners, particularly those in the segregation unit, who, when possible, they visited daily. Restrictions made engaging with prisoners harder. Covid meant that services and group meetings were often scheduled, but then cancelled; prisoners' bubbles and staff availability affected attendance. When possible, there were three regular religious services weekly: 126 in total.

There were two orderlies – an invaluable role for prisoners near release or at risk of self-harm. The chaplaincy was the main place where they could practise social skills with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and different age groups, in a less constrained environment. Orderlies were constantly monitored, and cheerfully occupied. One had never made coffee for anyone before he made us one; he asked us how to do it.

Chaplains supported 48 prisoners with family bereavements (last year: 34), and 52 (26) with serious family illnesses. They arranged video link 'visits' for prisoners with critically ill family members or carers, and also funeral attendance. They particularly supported prisoners with mental health issues.

The team gave Christmas gift packs with small items, including a hand-knitted bauble made by a volunteer, to Christian prisoners. The Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree scheme enabled volunteers to send £5 gift tokens with personal greetings from 60–70 prisoners to their mothers. At Easter, they gave Christian prisoners faith-related items, and a cream egg.

Muslim chaplains liaised with healthcare and kitchens before Ramadan, and faith-related special meals were offered to all. Faith-related and allergy information was widely shared. Even so, some prisoners got the wrong meals, creating bad feeling and distrust.

Sometimes Muslim prisoners felt upset by clumsy cell-searching by dog handlers: one cell search on the day celebrating the end of Ramadan caused particular distress. More religious and cultural awareness training was then given to staff; and they had ‘excellent curry’ at an informative Eid celebration event.

A distressing attack by a prisoner on a chaplain caused a review of procedures, with re-assessment of potential risks. Prisoners on the attacker’s wing sent a card with heartfelt messages to the injured chaplain, expressing sympathy and gratitude. We commend the SLT for their thoughtful support of the chaplain and their family.

Covid limited community contacts, but the chaplaincy’s 1847 fund was available for hardship grants. Chaplains looked out for extremist views, in order to counter them.

## 5.6 Incentives schemes

In January 2022, the prison launched its revised incentives policy (IP). This involves a modified points-based system. The policy is intended to be transparent and avoid bias. It adopts the three basic levels specified in HMPPS guidance: basic, standard and enhanced, with standard considered normal good behaviour.

The core of the policy is to encourage prisoners’ involvement in activities – education, workshops, other prison jobs (such as wing cleaning), and programmes – as well as a series of good behaviours.

Our reporting period included months of restrictions due to the pandemic, especially during 2021, with the first three calendar months of 2022 allowing the return of some form of normality. During the earlier period, prisoners did not really have enough freedom to earn (or lose) points by showing good (or bad) behaviours. Often officers noted that prisoners were behaving well – giving them points accordingly – when in fact there so few real chances for them to show good behaviour that this became almost meaningless.

The first calendar quarter of 2022 (the last quarter of the reporting period) was the first continuous period when behaviours could be tested by improved freedoms. The new IP policy – which used to be called ‘incentives and earned privileges’ (IEP) – was then launched, re-focusing on proven behaviours.

It was no surprise that behaviours improved during lockdown, though, as noted, that was usually because of lack of opportunity. One result of this was the gradual upgrade of prisoners’ IP levels to the highest category, enhanced. Post-Covid, it was not easy for staff to re-set expectations for enhanced to be earned by the very best of behaviours, engagement and attitude.

In the past, between 20 and 35% of prisoners might have been rated enhanced with most, say 50–60%, rated standard.

The table below shows how incentives levels have changed over the past four years:

	Basic		Standard		Enhanced		Total	
<b>2018-19</b>	55		200		137		392	
		14%		51%		35%		100%

<b>2019-20</b>	22		97		86		205	
		11%		47%		42%		100%
<b>2020-21</b>	5		72		123		200	
		2%		36%		62%		100%
<b>2021-22</b>	10		183		169		363	
		3%		50%		47%		100%

At the time of writing, there was a view amongst many of the staff we spoke with that the IP system was still subject to too much variation in applying the principles; many thought it was not being applied evenly.

Generally, this system encourages better behaviour, but some prisoners may get IP upgrades which are not really justified.

## 5.7 Complaints

We looked at the number of complaints from prisoners to the prison this year. We saw that numbers had approximately doubled, from 320 last year, to 673.

This is quite a large number, but still fewer than the 828 complaints in the year leading up to the pandemic.

The greater number of complaints this year, compared to last, is, we believe, for various reasons. For example, when Covid restrictions eased, there was generally more activity in the prison. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the number of prisoners slowly went up, as wings were refurbished and started to be used again.



As with most other prisons, most complaints (one third of the total) were about prisoners' property. Half of these were about matters to do with transfers, or things that happened at their last prisons.

Another main issue involved the process which allows prisoners to buy extra items, such as gaming consoles or DVDs, from the few authorised companies. Problems sometimes happen as prisoners have to pay for what they are ordering when they order it, and – as in the world outside – there may be delivery delays or other complications. The pandemic made some of these matters worse.

With the increase in prisoner numbers came complaints about the seeming lack of workshops and facilities giving them useful activities. As they had been so restricted during the pandemic, prisoners had hoped that they would be able to spend much more time out of their cells afterwards. This was often not possible, mainly because of staffing issues (see section 5.3, Staff).

Not surprisingly, many prisoners then tried to push for transfers to other prisons which they thought would offer better facilities.

There were also more complaints about staff-prisoner relationships.

We did not note any slowness by the prison in dealing with the prisoners' complaints.

## **5.8 Property**

Management of prisoners' property often causes difficulties in prisons. A third of all complaints that prisoners made in Aylesbury were about property: this was double the number of the year before.

The main reason for this is that, once Covid rules were relaxed, there was much more movement of prisoners into, and out of, the prison – and the total number of prisoners went up during the year. Another reason is that their property is managed using an old-fashioned card record-based system, which really needs updating (and, ideally, computerising).

A regular feature of property management is that prisoners' property often gets lost when they come from another prison. Over half of the complaints prisoners made were about property relating to the prison they came from.

For security reasons, prison staff do not tell prisoners in advance about exactly when they will move to another prison. Sometimes prisoners do not have the chance to pack their belongings themselves: prison officers do it for them, after they have already moved. If they come from a shared cell, this can complicate matters, as their cell-mates sometimes claim that some of the property belongs to them.

Although prisoners are supposed to stick to clearly defined (numeric and volumetric) amounts of property, some prisons have taken a more relaxed position on this rule. This means that there can be a build-up of property owned.

This causes issues, especially as transport companies have limited space in their vans and increasingly stick to rules limiting the amount of 'prop' that can go with a prisoner on a move. This also causes delays in forwarding the balance of prisoners' property. Sometimes the excess property never gets sent to the prisoner at all.

Prisoners do have the right to arrange for excess (or unauthorised) property to be sent to their family, at their own expense.

Prison governors have some discretion on what property prisoners can have in their prison, and what privileges apply – enhanced prisoners, for example, may be able to keep certain things that others cannot. This discretion can result in differences in what is acceptable between prisons.

With a determined focus on illegal items (for example, drugs) and ever more inventive ways used to smuggle items into the prison, some traditional privileges have become more restricted.

An example is family parcels to prisoners. Under the new rules, only enhanced prisoners at Aylesbury get a family clothes parcel, and only on their birthday. This tightening of the rule has not been easy for prisoners to accept.

## 6. Health and wellbeing

### 6.1 Healthcare general

NHS England commissions healthcare services for the prison. The Practice Plus Group – a privately owned company – provides these services.

Healthcare services are on site, in a separate unit. During the day, officers take prisoners to their appointments, and they get any medication they need. In the late afternoon, healthcare nurses visit the wings. They deliver medication to certain prisoners and watch them take it.

There were three complaints relating to healthcare or medical services in 2021-22. This number may not include complaints sent directly to the healthcare unit. Prisoners sent us three applications relating to 'health, including physical, mental, social care'. Two prisoners told us that no-one followed up their healthcare issues quickly enough. One felt that that no-one took his healthcare issue seriously enough.

Practice Plus prioritised delivering the core service. There were not enough of their staff available to run any healthcare forums with prisoners during the year.

During induction, officers ask prisoners about healthcare needs and learning disabilities and share this information, so that they can get the right help (see 4.1, Reception and induction). Mental health nurses went to prisoners' GOoD reviews. We saw that they had good relationships with the prisoners. They showed a thorough understanding of the prisoners' mental health issues as well as their broader context. We also saw the governors drawing on this knowledge during these reviews.

In line with policy, it is practice for a nurse to check on the physical health of all prisoners involved in use of force incidents. This happens immediately after the incident. Nurses make a record of any injuries and treatments, or note that there were no symptoms reported.

### 6.2 Physical healthcare

Nurses in healthcare work on a rota basis, with a minimum of two on duty. There were, when necessary, agency staff, too. Nurses decided the order of treatment of patients. They also referred prisoners to a general practitioner (GP) if necessary.

Nurses were available in the prison from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, and 8.30am to 5.30pm at the weekend. Outside these hours, the prison used the NHS 111 service.

This table shows the other practitioners regularly providing services:

	How often
<b>GP</b>	2.5 days weekly
<b>Dentist</b>	0.5 days weekly
<b>Physiotherapist</b>	2 x 0.5 days monthly

<b>Optician</b>	2 x 0.5 days monthly
<b>Podiatrist</b>	0.5 days quarterly

The table below shows the number of appointments that prisoners went to:

<b>Appointment type</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
Nursing activity	13,873	8,370
DART	2,944	1,401
Dental	234	221
GP	199	94
Outside hospital appointment	141	53
Optician	75	51
Physiotherapist	37	24
Podiatry	23	16

As the Covid situation got better, healthcare offered prisoners more appointments. The much larger number of appointments this year compared to last is also because the number of prisoners at Aylesbury grew during this year.

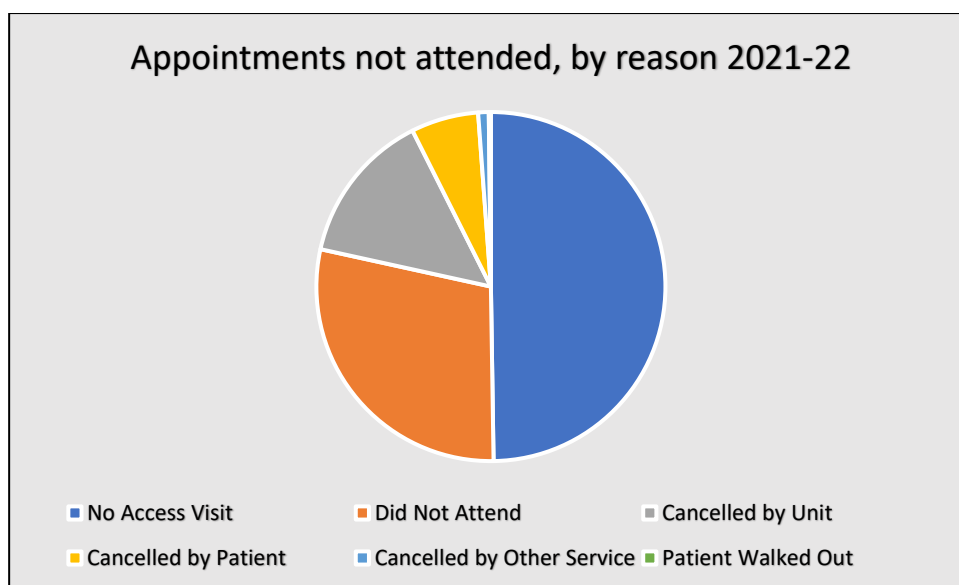
Relatively few prisoners missed their appointments – 1,026 out of 20,690 of all types of appointment – less than 5% (2020-21: 5%).

The main reason for missing appointments was 'no access visit' (510 appointments). This is where no-one could take the prisoner to the appointment. Reasons for this include staffing shortages, Covid lockdowns, or incidents such as fights.

Other reasons included:

- Did not attend: 294. The prisoner decided not to keep the appointment and did not turn up.
- Cancelled by unit: 145. The healthcare service cancelled the appointment, usually because they did not have enough staff.
- Cancelled by patient: 64. The prisoner cancelled the appointment himself.

When a prisoner missed an appointment, healthcare staff gave them the next available one, if they still needed it.



We did not hear of any cases of prisoners having to wait an unacceptable time for a suitable appointment.

Dental services had the longest waiting times. During the early part of the year, it was not possible to use aerosol-generating procedures, because of Covid. The dentist dealt only with emergency cases, and could not do fillings or take out teeth.

To catch up on the backlog, the dentist did more sessions: 67 instead of the contracted 52. Take-up by prisoners was low, at 63%.

At the end of March 2022, the waiting list was:

- 28 new referrals
- 11 ongoing treatments
- 33 waiting for aerosol-generating procedures.

There were 135 prisoners who tested positive for Covid, peaking from December 2021 to February 2022.

There were 206 prisoners who had to self-isolate. Most of these were newly arrived prisoners who had to self-isolate as a precaution.

### 6.3.1 Mental health

A full-time mental health nurse was available five days a week for primary mental healthcare. Services shared with two other sites provided out-of-hours cover: this was remote rather than in person.

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust provided a secondary care in-reach service. This included an InReach psychologist, a locum available one day a week. There was also a full-time assistant psychologist. Two left during the year, so there were some periods when none were available. The table shows the number of appointments that prisoners went to:

<b>Appointment type</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
InReach mental health nurse	1,620	1,768
Primary care mental health	554	754
InReach assistant psychologist	501	228
InReach psychiatrist clinic	283	393
Learning disability nurse	94	258
Psychologist	35	0
InReach psychologist	9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,096</b>	<b>3,401</b>

Prisoners missed only 8% of all appointments:

<b>Appointment type</b>	<b>Attended</b>	<b>Not attended</b>	<b>% not attended</b>
InReach mental health nurse	1,620	136	8%
Primary care mental health	554	8	1%
InReach assistant psychologist	501	56	10%
InReach psychiatrist clinic	283	48	15%
Learning disability nurse	94	7	7%
Psychologist	35	0	8%
InReach psychologist	9	4	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,096</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>8%</b>

### 6.3.2 Pathways

The prison offers a range of accredited programmes and other interventions which promote better mental health, better quality of life and successful rehabilitation. These include specific courses to help prisoners at high risk of violence, and courses to support those who are not very motivated or who do not much want to get involved.

The Aylesbury Pathways service, part of the contract for the national offender personality disorder framework, offers a broad set of these interventions. This is an outreach and day centre service for prisoners who are at high risk of harm or who have emerging personality disorder traits. Many are on the CSIP or ACCT lists (see

section 4). The unit has its own space, with both offices and meeting rooms where individual prisoners can follow the programmes without fear for their own safety. Facilities include a sensory garden.

The 20-person Pathways team has a combination of specialist clinicians and officers who are dedicated to the service. As with other departments, staffing was an issue during the pandemic. On the other hand, Pathways officers (who are part of the uniformed staff) were sometimes able to access wings when non-uniformed staff could not.

During lockdown periods, the Pathways team engaged with target prisoners using in-cell telephones and workbooks. Although, as mentioned elsewhere, there were often difficulties when trying to phone prisoners, generally the efforts of the Pathways team were well received and prisoners welcomed this contact. As soon as restrictions were lifted, Pathways used their pre-agreed exceptional delivery model to bring prisoners to the unit for one-to-one sessions with the team. From about January on, almost all the prisoners on the Pathways list were able to go to the unit for their therapy sessions.

Through the reporting year, approximately 52 prisoners engaged with the Pathways service. While the caseload added up to about 40 prisoners at one time, the number usually working with Pathways stabilised with an average of 30 prisoners for most of the year.

Courses offered included anger plus, mentalisation-based therapy introduction, social skills, one-to-one psychological therapy, art therapy and music production. Many of these are certificated and recorded as part of a prisoner's ongoing profile.

Prisoners often form strong bonds with team members when they are working with them and we commend the fact that staff check up on prisoners after they have left Aylesbury for other prisons.

#### **6.4 Social care**

There was no local authority sourced social care at Aylesbury at the time of writing.

#### **6.5 Exercise, regime**

The on-going pandemic, together with staff shortages, continually disrupted the prisoners' usual daily activities, (regime) and exercise during the reporting period. To try to control Covid outbreaks, wings were split into two, or sometimes three, bubbles. When there were new arrivals, or individual infections, the number of bubbles went up further. This multiplied the workload for the staff. As far as possible, prisoners, in bubbles, got a minimum of showers, as well as the chance to go on the exercise yards, and to do essential work activities.

As with last year, wing-based jobs, for instance cleaning and meal serving, continued. Some essential jobs, such as kitchens, laundry, laundrette, gardening, recycling, design technology (signage) and estate parties, continued too.

When not locked down, association periods, gym and workshops became available. Education was limited to activity on the wing for part of the year. See details in section 7.1.

Most unfortunately, the shortage of gym instructors, fully qualified physical education instructors, gradually became acute. Matters were exacerbated when gym staff were called to fill in elsewhere in the prison. In the gym there was a worry that sharing gym equipment could spread the virus.

There were large differences in the levels of activity during the extremes of the year. Even when the government relaxed restrictions on the population at large, the prison SLT was reluctant to relax regimes too quickly, in case Covid outbreaks in the prison recurred.

Throughout the year, we took snapshots of prisoners' out-of-cell activity. At the beginning of the year, only 16%–20% of prisoners left their cells during a given session, morning or afternoon, for either off-wing activity such as work, legal visits, healthcare visits or on-wing activity such as cleaning, painting and serving of meals. The remaining over 80% spent about 22.5 hours in their cells. The percentage involved in purposeful activity gradually increased during the year, as Covid restrictions eased: there could be over 50% out if one of the larger wings had access to the gym and most of the workshops were running.

We calculate that for most of the year the proportion of prisoners who were out of their cells at any one time was, on average, still a worryingly small 30%. Staff grappled with changing Covid rules, bubbles, and the prison at times being designated a Covid Red Site.

This was a transition year, as the country managed the return to any form of normality.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

The prison has subcontracted Inclusion, part of Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, to give prisoners psychosocial services. The drug and alcohol recovery team (DART) delivers these services. The team identifies prisoners who need drug or alcohol rehabilitation in three ways: through DART induction, including known users; by a member of staff making a referral when a prisoner has tested positive or is found under the influence; or by the prisoner self-referring. The team assesses each prisoner and creates an individualised care plan based on their needs.

DART gives harm reduction advice to all the prisoners who use the service. Before release, team members complete a release plan with each service user.

DART aims to offer a range of support. The most intensive is the 16-session course called the inclusion recovery programme (IRP), which takes five weeks to complete. The IRP is certificated. Team members record any lasting success and this forms part of the prisoner's ongoing prison record. The support offered includes in-cell workbooks, one-to-one sessions, group work and access to peer support.

During the reporting period, DART had 193 prisoners referred to the service. Of these referrals, 144 went on to get formal support.

The team aims to have about 60 accounts active at one time, but many more can be ongoing. Bearing in mind the conditions DART was operating under during the year and its own staffing issues, including staff shortages, this was a good result.

This was the second year of the pandemic, and users' access to this service continued to be difficult. Issues included staff being unable to get onto the wings because the prison, or the trust itself, decided that they should not go there for reasons related to Covid; wings being locked down due to actual Covid outbreaks; staff members being off with or due to Covid; and prison staff being unable to unlock prisoners due to wing staff shortages.

Ordinarily, the DART team aims to meet prisoners using their service face to face, but for much of this year they were forced to resort to the in-cell telephony system. This was not ideal, as there were only three places in the whole prison from where they could do this, and these were also in great demand from other services. This meant that time available to use the facility was limited. It was also found that many service users did not answer their phones when called. When this was the case, members of the DART team wrote to service users.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

Soft skills are not a focus at Aylesbury. Further, the pandemic limited prisoner movement, in turn diminishing active participation in representative roles) and mentoring opportunities. Even so, these roles were not completely lost in the prison. They regained focus as Covid restrictions eased. Staff encouraged prisoners to come forward and volunteer for mentoring and representation roles. These included Listeners, training and support provided by the Samaritans, diversity and inclusion reps, Shannon Trust representatives, who are trained and provide assistance with reading skills, prison council representatives, and others.

We invited some of the first group of these Shannon Trust mentors to an IMB Board meeting. Later, mentors told us that their role was hindered by not being allowed out of their cells often enough to support those who needed help. This could be explained by the ongoing shortage of wing staff. It could be tackled by management prioritisation.

It remains a goal for the prison to have as many prisoners as possible, on each wing, involved in these activities.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1.1 Education**

Milton Keynes College (MKC) provides education at Aylesbury. This established partnership, together with the creativity of Aylesbury's learning and skills manager, partly moderated the severe disruption to education within this reporting year. Covid

lockdowns were the most significant disruptors. At the same time, leadership of the MKC team was first absent through illness, and then changing. It depended on temporary senior staff, and there were further staff vacancies. In these circumstances, HMPPS staff, working closely with MKC, found it difficult to agree changes and make improvements.

Even as Covid restrictions eased, shortage of uniformed staff meant that it was still hard to get prisoners to any activity out of the cell, including education.

The Covid lockdown (April to September 2021) meant that education was largely delivered in-cell. Teachers developed written learning packages, and made much effort to redesign curricula. The quality of these improved. But any subject with an element of practical work, such as hospitality, was badly served by this form of learning. Most of the in-cell learning was unaccredited.

When allowed, the teaching staff showed flexibility and creativity in supporting learners in small groups, on wings, or in the open air, as appropriate.

During lockdown, new prisoners continued to arrive. Commendably, education induction continued, on paper, as opposed to computer-based. Prisoners did induction tests alone in their cells. This helped staff understand learner needs in English and maths for when lockdown ended. It may have helped prisoners to plan ahead for their own learning. When lockdown partially lifted in the autumn, some face-to-face learning quickly started up again. Prisoners then had to re-take all their induction tests on computers for the results to be valid. Further, MKC's computer system was upgraded in the autumn: it was not fully working for several weeks. Prisoners spoke to us about their frustrations about this. It delayed their learning again, even after Covid retreated. It seriously discouraged those less keen to learn.

Halfway through the year, the Shannon Trust partnership returned to Aylesbury, after considerable effort on both sides. Shannon Trust trains prisoner peer mentors to help build the skills and confidence of prisoners with the lowest literacy skills. Looking at induction notes, the IMB estimates that poor literacy affects up to 30% of Aylesbury prisoners. The Shannon Trust is a most welcome addition but should only be seen as extra support. It cannot replace structured focus on building literacy skills for the widest possible number of prisoners before they are released.

We noted the lack of recognition for successful learners in last year's report. This year there was more evidence of congratulating successful learners and recognising their achievements. There was a 'learner of the month' award, and successes were celebrated in the prisoner newsletter.

Covid made everyone think again about in-cell learning. WayOut TV provided specialist TV packages; it was also a way of giving prisoners general information about the regime. It was expensive for the prison. Though billed as a helpful addition to the education offer, it did not deliver the benefits promised. When prisoners were asked, they made it clear that they preferred face-to-face learning, supported by a skilled teacher.

### **7.1.2 Library**

Library use is inconsistent and often disappointingly low. The professional librarian was not always included when the rota for library use was changed. When he had

not been fully consulted, there were times when he was in the prison but his skills were not used in the best way. Rota changes later in the reporting year seemed to include his input more often.

Rotas gave time for each wing, as well as prisoners off wings in workshops, to visit the library. Too often, we found the library completely empty when we checked. Wing staff sometimes forgot their slot, or could not provide enough staff to escort prisoners to the library. Some workshop staff were more careful about library visits than others; some were not careful at all.

During the pandemic, staff were able to deliver books to prisoners on wings if books were requested. This worked at a low level, but ruled out the benefits of browsing and chances to develop new interests. When prisoners were in the library, they usually focused sensibly on the task and were well behaved.

	<b>New library members who joined that month</b>	<b>Total library users</b>	<b>Total uses</b>	<b>Notes – including 'outreach' (= books taken to prisoners)</b>
Apr-21	8	10	16	
May-21	8	36	18	
Jun-21	7	253	17	
Jul-21	9	139	14	
Aug-21	7	138	13	
Sep-21	3	65	13	
Oct-21	3	80	22	Outreach: 33
Nov-21	4	144	36	Outreach: 09
Dec-21	1	32	6	Outreach: 22
Jan-22	1	84	9	Outreach: 50
Feb-22	5	190	27	Outreach: 53
Mar-22	10	263	34	Outreach: 21

Analysis of annual library usage by wing and by workshop shows big differences between the highest and lowest performing wings. This suggests that, if managers acted, they could reset the priority given to library use. We recognise that a shortage of staff makes library use difficult on some days. A wing is consistently a low use wing; G is regularly one of the highest. Similarly, gardens take the working prisoners into the library on the slot allocated, but recycling, for example, shows almost no visits.

We query the even distribution of slots to different workshops. If some simply cannot find the time to include library visits, perhaps because they just have too much work to do, the prisoners in them lose out every week. Given the importance of improving literacy for these young men, this is very disappointing.

## 7.2 Vocational training, work

Covid affected access to vocational training and work until the last months of this reporting year. With the partial lifting of restrictions mid-year, things seemed to be getting back to normal. This was short-lived. Workshops (below) stayed open, with varying consistency. Regulations allowed fewer than usual prisoners in them, because of social distancing.

Workshop	Sessions	Number of prisoners that Covid rules, and prison working with social distancing, allowed
<b>Bicycles (refurbishing)</b>		5
<b>Kitchens</b>	Sessions were unpredictable.	8
<b>Launderette</b>		4
<b>Laundry</b>	Staff absences and complete lockdowns affected all except work in the kitchens.	8
<b>Gardens</b>		10
<b>Recycling/Estates</b>		10
<b>Signs</b>		6

As well as these, there were about 30 wing-based jobs for cleaners and orderlies, trusted prisoners working in different parts of the prison. There were about 57 jobs for prisoners on days when work and out-of-cell wing activity was allowed.

We continued to be very concerned about the quality and variety of vocational training and work. What was offered was often dull, undemanding, and almost completely unmechanised. It could reasonably be characterised as 30 years behind the modern world, with little relationship to any work prisoners might look for on release.

The reducing reoffending department did some important research at Aylesbury into the match between skills and future employment. But this is effectively useless without support from HMPPS to modernise workshops, and to resource essential changes.

Too often when our members visited the prison, we saw that prisoners in the workshops were not really working. Seeing prisoners out of the cells was heartening, but that did not necessarily mean they were really doing vocational training or satisfying work.

The bicycles workshop, a partnership between HMPPS Industries and Life Cycle, a not-for-profit supporting cycling and prison-based bicycle refurbishment, was the standout exception. Prisoners worked purposefully, under thoughtful, firm guidance,

gaining different skills. There was a finished product, refurbished bicycles, and they could work towards City and Guilds accreditation (levels 1 and 2).

One imaginative initiative started this year to develop skills, build confidence and potentially re-engage prisoners with formal learning who felt no inclination towards it. Teachers from MKC developed learning materials relating specifically to the workshops, and supported prisoners to learn within this less formal environment.

Gardening was the most successful. Structured learning about horticulture, at an appropriate level, and with an opportunity to go deeper, underpinned practical gardening. Gardening and horticulture were seen as a good area for the prison to develop longer term: much new equipment was bought. Covid restrictions hampered this initiative and damage to the poly-tunnels during the winter storm also affected the initiative. At the time of this report new polythene had yet to be bought.

It is yet to be seen if this focus, and the availability of new equipment, leads to stronger skills development. Gardening and outdoor ground work offer potential for employment after prison, but the young prisoners, mostly from urban backgrounds, can be hard to persuade on this point.

Towards the end of the reporting year, when the transition to a category C prison began, concern about the range and quality of work, and vocational training, became even more pressing. It needs to become a priority for the prison in coming years.

The number of active workshops was worryingly small. There is significant difficulty in recruiting trainers with appropriate skills and capability. One factor is evident: the pay offered to the instructors is often much lower than the market rate offered for these people in roles outside the prison service. This is not likely to improve in current circumstances. Prisons must try to offer competitive salaries to attract talent, and to help reduce re-offending.

### **7.3.1 Offender management**

Staffing of the offender management unit (OMU) has continued to be low, running at an average of 60%. Covid restrictions made contact between prisoners and their offender managers difficult. Short staffing meant they prioritised prisoners close to release, and those who had to work with OMU for their sentence plans. Contact via the in-cell phones helped.

Prisoners almost always knew who their offender manager was. They valued highly the contact they had with them, and the support they felt they got from them. But the contact seldom felt sufficient.

Informally, IMB members often heard that prisoners had sent many applications asking to see their offender managers. These were sometimes about matters which might be better dealt with by well-informed wing staff on a day-to-day basis. Prisoners also sent us formal applications mentioning the difficulties they had getting attention from offender managers. They often raised this as a worry, or a problem, in their GOoD reviews. As the prison moves towards taking more prisoners with shorter sentences, there will be an increasing call on offender managers, their skills and time. The low level of staffing will become an ever-increasing problem.

### 7.3.2 Psychology

Psychology is a strong team in Aylesbury. Members systematically engaged with the most vulnerable prisoners, both short and long term. They focused on protection and improvement in their lives, and professionally informed the treatment of all prisoners. During this time, psychology, Pathways and programmes continued to deliver, and treatment manage, accredited and validated interventions. We discuss these in both 6.3.2 Pathways, and 7.3.3 Programmes.

An important example of their work is the profiling they do under the About Me programme, working with prisoners to identify issues which affect their behaviour.

Team members worked on mapping the influence and violence of gangs. We look forward to seeing the effects of this over the coming year. They were also instrumental in setting up a policy for a mediation process. We have long wanted to see this at Aylesbury.

Psychology planned, and gave some, training to staff on acquired brain injury and learning difficulties and challenges. Other training – delivered as far as Covid permitted – included:

- working with young men with challenging behaviours (for officers)
- barriers to change insights (segregation staff)
- key worker training (key worker champions)
- choices and changes (key workers and prison offender managers)

The psychology team also:

- worked closely with the prison on implementing procedural justice
- helped set up peer worker schemes on:
  - managing long-sentenced young men
  - transitions from the children and young people's estate
- completed psychological risk assessments for parole

The team worked with other departments on CSIP plans for each prisoner considered most in need of such support. They completed plans and went to prisoners' reviews, helping to manage the risk of violence. Team members produced plans for those most at risk of self-harm and suicide. They went to ACCT reviews of prisoners whose cases were the most complex. (See section 4 on CSIP and ACCT.)

A new head of residential systematised a weekly cross-disciplinary review of prisoners in the segregation unit. Psychology staff went to these reviews.

Meetings they attended included a multi-professional complex case clinic meeting, safety intervention meeting, reducing reoffending, equalities action team, safer prisons, gang strategy, pathfinder and SLT. The psychology team played an important role during the pandemic, as staff coped with prisoners who had to spend an unhealthy amount of time in their cells. Members developed essential strategies to reduce Covid anxiety.

A reorganisation has determined that the psychology team will be joining South Central psychology services in the coming months, creating an opportunity for wider breadth of work across different prisons. But this may mean they have less time for certain work at Aylesbury. We hope they can manage this in a way that does not disadvantage Aylesbury's prisoners.

### 7.3.3 Programmes

The programmes team works with prisoners who have release or parole dates within the next 24 months, and who have to meet certain goals in their sentence plans. They prioritised their work with prisoners accordingly. The team continued this work throughout the year, despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

During this reporting year, team members offered all the accredited programmes that they normally offered. They had to run them in smaller groups, given the limit to the number of people who were allowed to be in meeting rooms. They also had to keep prisoners within their wing-based 'bubbles'. In March 2022, group sizes were increased. Focus was on giving prisoners close to their release dates programmes which were essential for them.

The team offered the following programmes:

- Kaizen general violence (GV)
- Identity Matters
- RESOLVE
- Becoming a New Me (BNM) + GV
- Becoming a New Me (BNM) + Sex
- Individual Engagement.

All are very valuable. Kaizen, for example, '... is an accredited offender behaviour programme for adult males who are assessed as high or very high risk. It [...] adopts a strengths based, future focussed approach in order to raise hope for the future'. (<https://insidetime.org/kaizen-information-for-participants/>)

Within the reporting year, 17 programmes were delivered and 23 individual prisoners completed accredited programmes. The breakdown was as follows:

Kaizen (GV)	3	
Identity Matters	5	
RESOLVE	9	<i>3 x 1:1 cases, and 3 x small groups</i>
BNM + GV	2	<i>run as 1:1</i>
BNM + Sex	1	
Individual Engagement	2	

We note with disappointment that the numbers of prisoners who were able to follow these programmes was very low.

One positive innovation this year saw members of the programmes and psychology teams liaising closely. They created a diversity and inclusion action plan, establishing better ways of helping prisoners of different protected characteristics. This had been in the planning since 2020.

## **7.4 Family contact**

Throughout the reporting period, family contact relied heavily on the use of in-cell telephones. Some families also used the less reliable, and less popular, system of remote contact through social video calls. Prisoners noted that some family members did not have the technical capability to make use of these from the outside. Further, the sensitivity of the software controlling one-to-one links meant that even the smallest interruption on the outside, such as a third person moving across the screen, led to immediate closure of the link.

There are prisoners who have no contact with family or friends outside. It is possible to track this by looking at the visit and phone use records. We did not gather these statistics during this reporting year, but will do so in future. We saw no action on the part of the prison in these cases.

Social visits at the prison were available only at intervals. These depended on the status of Covid in the prison at the time, as well as the Covid situation nationally. It was clear to us that the prison authorities were keen to start having social visits again whenever they could. The Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), an independent UK charity which works with prisoners and their families, supports social visits at the prison. Pact staff or volunteers provided a well-run space for visitors, as well as a limited service of snacks and sweets for them to share with the prisoners.

The visits hall is reasonably comfortable, but poorly adapted for visits by children. Roughly 8% of the prisoners in Aylesbury this year were fathers. The story reading programme, arranged by the charity Storybook Dads, by which fathers could read and record stories, and have recordings sent to their children, was made available to the prisoners. Only one prisoner took up this opportunity.

One family day was held during the year. Twelve prisoners and their families took part. This was well organised and welcomed by IMB.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

A YOI is not designed to be a resettlement prison. As a result, the support available to prepare prisoners for release from the prison is minimal. The population of the prison began to change through the reporting year. Covid limited moves to local resettlement prisons before release, and Aylesbury also received some category C shorter sentenced prisoners.

As a result of these changes, an unprecedented 24 prisoners were released from Aylesbury this reporting year. Preparing prisoners to seek employment on release depended almost entirely on a few representatives of third sector agencies. The single employment coach for the whole prison is an employee of the Forward Trust. Alongside him there was just one custodial case manager from the CF03 programme. The CF03 programme is aimed at improving employability in ex-offenders who seem particularly poorly equipped to join the labour market. It is supported by both HMPPS and the European Social Fund, secured when the UK was still a member of the EU, and is soon to come to an end. Trailblazer mentors continued to play a part in supporting Aylesbury prisoners close to release, but only those prisoners who requested this type of mentoring received it.

The OMU was stretched at all times. The acute shortage of staff in the OMU (see section 7.3.1) meant that prisoners were often extremely anxious that they would not complete their designated sentence plans in time for release.

## 8 The work of the IMB

During the year the prison gradually began to restore some post-Covid normality, and our work as monitors mirrored this gradual change. The majority of our board meetings remained virtual. We made 168 monitoring visits and calls this year, contrasting with the 229 monitoring visits and calls made last reporting year. Active members in the team were fewer this year.

On-site monitoring gradually returned through the year. With the lockdown of the prisoners, there were fewer areas of activity within the prison to monitor. Early in the year we still had to respect infection-limiting protocols on site. When visiting in person, we prioritised segregation unit rounds, attendance at segregation reviews, and checking in with more vulnerable prisoners. We telephoned prisoners in their cells. We used this for check-ins, and to speak about applications.

All our monitoring is well organised, using an electronically shared matrix on a shared spreadsheet, ensuring that all active parts of the prison are called or visited regularly. When special events are organised – these were very few in the reporting year, but included an exhibition for Black History Month – we try to have a monitor in attendance.

The number of applications made to the IMB significantly increased during the year – see numbers below. This was mainly due to the influx of new prisoners of a different category. We devised a method of maintaining confidentiality for all prisoner applications, despite the remote monitoring system.

The Board Development Officer improved the digitisation of applications, helping us improve team knowledge and future application responses.

The team lost morale through the year. Remote monitoring limited the role of monitors, reducing proper involvement with the life of prisoners. Two of our team members resigned and one member continued to take a sabbatical.

We ran one recruitment exercise, giving us two suitable candidates who passed all vetting. Unfortunately, one resigned soon after early induction, finding that the restricted nature of monitoring at that time did not suit him. The second recruit has proved a very positive addition to the team.

**Board support**

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	08
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	07
Total number of visits to the establishment	168
Total number of segregation reviews attended	c. 200

## Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	This year	Last year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	6	1
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	8	6
C	Equality	1	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	11	0
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	17	5
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	1
F	Food and kitchens	3	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	3	0
H1	Property within this establishment	6	1
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	5	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	7	3
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	11	3
K	Transfers	11	0
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	3	0
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>22</b>



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