



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

**For reporting year  
1 December 2021 – 30 November 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 Frankland was the first purpose-built dispersal prison and opened in 1981 on the outskirts of Durham city, providing a maximum security environment for adult convicted men serving sentences of over four years and category A remand prisoners. In 2019, following the national configuration programme, Frankland was designated as a prison with a training function, its purpose being to settle prisoners into the prison environment and identify and address their offending behaviour and needs. This has resulted in little change, other than prisoners being transferred to Frankland earlier in their sentence. The prison has an operational capacity of 852 and has operated close to capacity in the reporting year. An important factor is the prison's location, particularly as the most northerly high security prison and the most distant for many families, friends and professionals visiting prisoners. In addition, public transport links from the nearest railway station to the prison are poor.

The main prisoner accommodation consists of 10 units, as follows:

- Four original wings – A, B, C and D. Each can house up to 108 vulnerable prisoners.
- Two wings, F and G, which opened in 1998. They can house up to 120 and 86 ordinary location prisoners, respectively.
- The Westgate unit (capacity 65) opened in 2004 for prisoners with severe personality disorders. It includes the psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit, with a capacity of 21, which opened in May 2012.
- J wing, which opened in 2009 and can house up to 120 ordinary location prisoners.
- A separation centre, which opened in 2018 and was the first in the UK prison estate exclusively to hold prisoners with extremist ideological views.
- A segregation unit (management and progression unit: MPU), which has a capacity of 28 cells, including two designated cells which are only used for close supervision centre (CSC) prisoners.

The following agencies provide support to the prison:

- Spectrum provides the following services: healthcare (nursing and support), therapy, pharmacy, GP and clinical substance misuse.
- Non-clinical substance misuse is provided by Humankind.
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys Foundation Trust provides mental health services.
- Dental services are provided by Burgess & Hyder Dental Services.
- Learning and skills development is provided by Milton Keynes College.
- Security support is provided by Durham Police (two police liaison officers).
- Prisoner escort services are provided by GEOAmey for all prisoners other than category A.
- Facilities maintenance, cleaning and other small works are provided by Amey plc.

The following voluntary organisations and volunteers help in the smooth running of the prison:

- North East Prison After Care Society (NEPACS) volunteers work alongside prison staff to assist in the day-to-day running of the visitors' centre and in providing support to families.
- The Sunderland branch of the Samaritans provides training for prison Listeners and Mind provides counselling support for prisoners with mental health issues.

#### **Age range of the prisoner population**

Age range	Total	Percentage of population
18-24	39	4.7%
25-34	195	23.5%
35-44	230	27.9%
45-54	145	17.6%
55-64	140	17%
65-74	59	7.2%
75-84	17	2.1%

The age range 18-24 as a percentage of the prisoner population is lower than the previous reporting year: 2020–2021, 59 (7.2%); 2021–2022, 39 (4.7%). The age range 55+ plus has shown an increase: 2020–2021, 188 (23%); 2021–2022, 216 (26.3%). The increase in the number of prisoners in the older age group is an issue for the Prison Service to be aware of, because of the resulting increasing pressure on resources.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

Following the pandemic, the IMB has been monitoring in the prison. Outbreaks of Covid-19 on wings have resulted in some restrictions to the regime in the areas affected. The Board has seen the regime restrictions reduce following the pandemic. It is pleasing to report that some of the beneficial strategies introduced during the pandemic have continued. The use of technology to provide social video calls is appreciated by many prisoners.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

The IMB is satisfied that staff and senior managers work hard to maintain a safe environment whilst dealing with a number of prisoners with challenging behaviours. Whilst any instance of assault or self-harm is always unwelcome, the establishment compares favourably with other establishments in the long-term high security estate (LTHSE) and reflects the management focus on safety.

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

The IMB has recommenced visiting Frankland since the pandemic eased and we are satisfied that the regime throughout the pandemic was fair and humane. Some regime restrictions during the reporting year have been in place on wings affected by Covid outbreaks. Officers have had difficult situations to handle but have carried these out fairly. The IMB is always notified if and when an incident occurs.

We are satisfied that prisoners are treated with compassion, fairness and humanity.

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

The pandemic impacted on prisoners' access to healthcare professionals, with serious and urgent cases prioritised. Waiting times for dental appointments were a particular concern. The room allocated to the mental health team is too small for the size of the team and there are insufficient rooms for members of the team to meet with prisoners. The IMB remains concerned about the lack of an appropriate environment for prisoners diagnosed with dementia.

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

The pandemic had a significant impact on resettlement, with extended hours of isolation in cells. It was good to see many appropriate activities being reintroduced as restrictions were eased.

HMP Frankland is part of the long-term high security estate (LTHSE). It generally only receives prisoners from other prisons and it is rare for a prisoner to be released directly from HMP Frankland. It is the most northern of the high security prisons. The Prison Service does not locate prisoners away from families as a deliberate strategy. Some prisoners make every attempt (including being disruptive) to get transferred to a prison nearer their families.

### **3.2 Main areas for development**

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

What plans does the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) have to address the chronic staffing shortages in healthcare?

We would again ask the Minister to look into the tracking and tracing of property. This is long overdue.

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

How are illicit drugs getting into the estate?

Days are still being lost in the workshops because of on-going heating issues. Why has this problem not been resolved?

How does the Prison Service plan to cope with the demands on resources resulting from an increasing older age range population?

HMP Frankland's provision for pharmacy on the lower older wings is not fit for purpose. Does the Prison Service have a solution to this critical situation?

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

What further action can be taken to prevent illicit drugs/items getting into the estate?

What actions are in place to improve the complaints response times?

What plans are in place to replace or repair kitchen equipment so that the provision is not affected?

### **3.3 Progress since the last report**

Issue raised	Response given	Action taken
Healthcare provision for mental health	Positive response	Plans in place to increase provision
Key worker provision	Positive response, return to increased provision	Increased provision and management input

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

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

Reception for prisoners generally runs smoothly. Prison to prison transfers for category A prisoners have to be completed in one journey, which means prisoners may arrive late in the day. Category B prisoners can be held overnight in another prison if necessary. Prisoners may also be transferred to a nearby prison from court due to contract issues, leaving it to HMP Frankland staff to make the final part of the journey with the prisoner.

The prisoner escort records (PERs) are in two paper forms, depending on whether the prisoner is going or coming from prison or hospital. GeoAmey also uses an electronic version. Differences between the systems had previously caused problems but now run more smoothly.

Induction takes place on one of two wings, depending on whether the prisoner is classed as a vulnerable prisoner (VP) or a main location prisoner. Induction is comprehensive and lasts about 10 days. The IMB is actively seeking to improve the information provided during induction regarding its role.

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

There are 24 active Listeners – 12 VP and 12 main. Recently the top three concerns were issues with staff or the prison regime (42%), mental health (42%) and family (25%). Fourteen percent of the calls related to self-harm, with 7% relating to suicidal thoughts or feelings. The Listeners work well as a team to support some of the most vulnerable prisoners' contacts. The prison is making sure Listeners have the opportunity to debrief at the end of a session for the sake of their own mental health.

The rate of self-harm incidents has fluctuated but recently has started a downward trend. Throughout the reporting period three prisoners have been responsible for most of the incidents. The psychology department is exploring the issues raised by this handful of complex prisoners. It is noted that there does not appear to be any pattern to the prolific self-harming. Information is regularly circulated to all staff about the issue of self-harm and what can be done by staff to minimise the number of incidents and the number of prisoners involved.

There have been five deaths in custody during the reporting period, apparently from natural causes. Also during this period, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) has issued three reports relating to deaths that happened in a previous reporting period. The three deaths were all judged to be due to natural causes. In two cases the PPO made care recommendations which were accepted and actioned by the prison. The Samaritans are developing a new 'postvention' initiative to provide increased support to prisoners who are adversely affected by being in custody. The new initiative will involve some changes to the establishment's contingency plans following deaths in custody



### 4.3 Violence

At times during this reporting period a number of violent incidents have taken place in the MPU. Maintaining levels of stability in the MPU in relation to both violence and self-harm remains a priority for HMP Frankland. The location of all violent incidents continues to be reviewed on a monthly basis to identify any areas of concern.

Whilst violence reduction continues to be a priority, Frankland compares favourably with other prisons in the LTHSE, particularly given the relative size of the population.

### 4.4 Use of force

There were 158 use of force incidents in the calendar year 2021, which averages about 13 incidents a month. So far in 2022 (up to the end of November) there have been 138 incidents, averaging about 12 per month. Fifty-one incidents in 2022 took place in the MPU.

<b>Reason for use of force</b>	<b>Number of incidents</b>
Damage to prison property	8
Non-compliance	30
Prevent self-harm	7
Threats	5
Violence – assault on prisoner	23
Violence – assault on staff	12
Other	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>

There were 111 spontaneous use of force incidents, with 27 being planned. The numbers of planned interventions have more than doubled over the previous year. This is due to the number of planned interventions in the MPU because of the number of complex cases transferred in. Of all use of force incidents, 39 have involved prisoners aged under 25. The greatest number of use of force incidents occurred in the MPU (51), with C wing next with 18.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Use of force incidents</b>
Asian	14
Black	17
Mixed	19
White	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>

Discussion around the reasons for the use of force incidents involving black, Asian and minority ethnic and under-25 prisoners has shown no concerns about the reasons why force was used on this category of prisoner.

Twelve incidents resulted in injuries and medical attention to staff in 2022, as opposed to five in 2021. Five prisoners suffered injuries in 2022 compared with 26 in 2021. No batons have been drawn so far in 2022. PAVA has been used once in

2022. This was to enable staff to exit a cell safely following an assault by a prisoner on two staff members.

During 2022, special accommodation has been used a total of 40 times so far, more than the 16 times it was used in 2021. Special accommodation is only used when absolutely necessary and prisoners are held in that location for the minimal time and reviewed regularly while housed there. The IMB is notified whenever a prisoner is put into special accommodation.

#### 4.5 Preventing illicit items

The prison is searched regularly for illicit items. There are two main types of searches. These are routine and targeted. Targeted searches are intelligence-led. Dogs are used to assist in the search for hooch and drugs. During the period of the reporting year the following finds were made. Comparison figures are given for the previous reporting period. The MPU is the area of the prison with the largest number of finds in the current period.

Item	Number of finds 2020-2021	Number of finds 2021-2022
Drugs	100	26
Drug items	20	19
Weapons	53	39
Phones	26	15
Sim cards	28	11
Chargers	18	4
Memory cards	9	9
Hooch	77	39
Ligature	18	45
Miscellaneous items	105	78
Damaged items	53	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>341</b>

Attempts have been made to get various drugs into the prison. Recently this has included cannabis and ketamine. The prison monitors the situation closely. Mandatory drug testing (MDT) continues to take place. HMP Frankland has met all MDT random testing targets from August 2022 to date.

The recently published Frankland drugs policy demonstrates the wide range of strategies used to combat the trafficking of illicit substances into the prison. Overall, this has had some impact, whilst remaining an issue.

Recently the trend of finds following MDT testing shows an increase:

April 2022 – 16.3% positive

May 2022 – 12.20% positive (national 14.8%)

June 2022 – 20.59% positive

September 2022 – 28.57% positive (national 14.79%)

This issue is a high priority for the regime and constantly being prioritised. The IMB acknowledges the frequent alerts and reminders published by senior leaders to all staff. The significant question is 'how are these substances being trafficked into the estate?'

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

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

Prisoners in Frankland are housed in single cells with a washbasin and toilet. There are separate showers located on each wing for daily use by prisoners.

Cells are provided for prisoners with mobility problems and these facilitate wheelchairs. The cells are not ideal in all cases. A few have limited access for the prisoner to move around in a wheelchair. There are three lifts and five stair lifts so that prisoners can access other landings.

Upon arrival, prisoners are provided with bedding, blankets, sheets and pillows. Each cell has a television and units to store their belongings and personal items. There are plans to provide in-cell telephones. Each wing/landing has a telephone kiosk for the use of prisoners. Telephone lines have been problematic in some areas recently, but hopefully this has now been resolved (see section 7.4 Family contact – plans for in-cell telephone provision).

Following the pandemic, the kitchen has a full complement of prisoners and staff working. They continue to prepare food to a high standard. The IMB visits the kitchen every week and tastes various dishes. We also observe service of food on the wings. Some prisoners constantly complain about the food, but the IMB considers the offer to be nutritious, and it is prepared to give the prisoners a healthy diet.

The frequent issues arising from kitchen equipment breakdown and the time taken to replace or repair it does sometimes affect the provision.

### **5.2 Segregation**

The MPU regime of offering daily telephone calls, exercise and shower time has remained in place during the reporting period.

The MPU has operated at capacity or near capacity throughout the reporting period, with staff promoting professional working relationships, displaying empathy, offering coping advice and engaging with and indeed promoting the multidisciplinary team consisting of uniformed staff, senior managers, psychology, and the mental health team. This multidisciplinary team approach is for the benefit of the number of complex cases consistently in the MPU, some with quite complex mental health needs. The IMB encourages use of the meeting bubble for stakeholders to engage with prisoners segregated. Long-term segregated prisoners attend regular segregation review boards, where their onward pathway is discussed, with recommendations made. The multidisciplinary team often refers prisoners to small, discrete units in order to progress. The facility on Unit 2 of the Westgate, which can help reintegrate prisoners into the general population, is a good example. The MPU has on occasions housed prisoners from the close supervision centres in the agreed two dedicated cells. They are managed and held under rule 46, and therefore do not attend segregation review boards.

The staff in this reporting period have been referred to the performance recognition committee, and they were named the 'team of the month' for July 2022. The IMB has

been impressed with the way officers handled everything during the pandemic and is delighted they have been put forward for this recognition.

The MPU regime of offering daily telephone calls, exercise and shower time has remained in place during the reporting period.

Segregation to segregation transfers within the LTHSE are commonplace.

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

In October 2022, HMP Frankland had 416 key workers (KWs). The percentage of prisoners allocated a KW was 99.73%. A new prisoner is allocated a KW within three days of arriving. The percentage of prisoners complying with the scheme is improving, and in October 2022 was 67%. The total monthly number of KW sessions held has risen from 964 in April 2022 to 1251 in October 2022.

Key work activity is regularly monitored by senior leaders, the IMB regularly checks key work activity prior to dealing with a prisoner issue or application.

Based on observations during monitoring the IMB considers staff/prisoner relationships to be good on most occasions.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

The monthly foreign national offender information hub provides support for staff when dealing with issues arising for foreign national prisoners. These include topics such as:

- assistance with asylum requests
- provision of a foreign national helpline on the prison telephone PIN system
- sharing of good practice between prisons
- modern slavery assistance with queries
- support for cross-border transfer requests

The diversity and equality action team (DEAT) meets monthly. The meeting reviews submitted discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) to enable the team to identify areas for action. During the reporting period, an average of 12.5 DIRFs were submitted monthly.

Despite only 27.6% of the prison population being black, Asian or minority ethnic, this group submitted 43% of all DIRFs.

Forty-five percent of all DIRFs were submitted by white prisoners. This is under-representation, since 71.8% of prisoners are of white ethnicity.

Equality representatives promote the equalities policy to all. They provide peer support with issues relating to the protected characteristics.

HMP Frankland seeks to ensure that all transsexual prisoners are treated fairly and in accordance with the law.

### **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

Full and part time chaplains cover the major religions. There are usually one or two chaplains in each day, which allows statutory duties to be fulfilled. Following Covid restrictions, statutory worship and faith teaching groups have resumed. The

chaplaincy covers a range of pastoral support, including establishing or maintaining contact with family and friends. Chaplains provide bereavement support and can provide a prison visitor or pen-pal.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes (IP)**

Now the prison is out of Covid restrictions, the regime has gone back to the incentives policy framework (October 2021), where privileges are earned. Prisoners are given incentives to earn privileges. They do not always engage to benefit from these. There have been occasions when prisoners and staff have been challenged by the restricted regime, but satisfactory outcomes have been achieved on most occasions. When formulating the policy, a cross-section of views were taken from staff and residents. Surveys and various forums were also used in the consultation process.

The policy looks in detail at:

- the behavioural principles. What does good behaviour look like? (consultation between staff and prisoners)
- incentive levels
- reviews and moving up or down levels
- what incentives are available for good behaviour
- supporting those who find it hard to engage in the scheme
- recording good and poor behaviour
- informing prisoners
- the appeals process
- incentives forum

The policy provides very clear guidance on the benefits of the scheme and how to succeed in earning privileges.

## **5.7 Complaints**

From May to October in the reporting year there was a total of 2,109 complaints, and 996 were answered on time (48%). This is not satisfactory, but the complaints clerk position has changed hands twice during this period, resulting in training having to be undertaken. This needs to improve in the next reporting period. If the IMB has occasion to chase a complaint up, the clerk is always willing to assist.

The IMB is back to normal visiting. During the reporting period, 278 IMB applications were received and answered. This represents a dramatic increase, following the return to normal regime.

## **5.8 Property**

Prisoner transfer to and from Frankland consistently leads to numerous complaints regarding property arrival: late arrival or in some cases property not arriving at all. This has been a problem for many years and never seems to get resolved. The situation has not improved in this reporting year, to the frustration of officers and prisoners and the IMB. Prisoners become frustrated and angry. The IMB spends a lot of time chasing property. Sometimes property is never found and the prisoner has

to claim compensation. This is never a satisfactory outcome, when prisoners have their own 'treasures' in their property, which cannot be replaced with compensation.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Since April 2020, the healthcare contract has been run by Spectrum Community Health CIC (Spectrum), Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, and Humankind (which provides non-clinical substance abuse services). Dental services are provided by Burgess & Hyder.

The Care Quality Commission has been conducted through virtual meetings.

Staffing continues to be a constant challenge. At the time of writing the team was carrying many vacancies and was reliant on agency staff, particularly at staff nurse level. During the pandemic the healthcare prisoner consultative committee (PCC) was stood down. Prisoners arriving in Frankland are seen in reception for an initial health screening assessment, with a further screening within five days.

Complaints regarding healthcare from prisoners have been a concern throughout the reporting year. It is pleasing to note that the introduction of the PALS telephone line for patients' use has enabled resolutions to be established quickly in many cases. This has improved the situation. Complaints are for a variety of reasons, but show a rising trend for medication purposes. We have been told that complaints are handled in line with NHS guidelines.

Whilst primary healthcare continues to operate at full capacity following Covid restrictions, the impact of staffing shortages and at times the rise in Covid have compounded the pressures on provision and services. The capacity to provide chaperone support is an example of provision affected. Whilst the use of agency staffing is a strategy to mitigate the impact of shortages, overall performance in primary healthcare can only be improved once staffing levels are improved.

There are plans to improve provision for mental health in 2023.

The facilities for pharmacy dispensing on the lower wings is inadequate and in need of upgrading to make them fit for purpose.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

There are nine single rooms for in-patient provision. Prisoners from the MPU are sometimes located into healthcare for clinical reasons. There is a palliative care suite, which has recently been recertified by Macmillan. PRAISE. This is a credit to the staff on the unit. Waiting times continue to be a concern and have been exacerbated by the pandemic, when only necessary or urgent cases have been seen. Waiting times for the various clinics are still a concern.

There have been some innovative strategies used to reduce waiting lists. At one point during the reporting year, waiting time for a dental appointment was one year plus. By providing extra sessions, this has been reduced to 39 weeks at the time of writing.



### **6.3 Mental health**

Four clinicians manage a caseload of around 75–100 cases. An additional clinician works exclusively in the MPU dealing with reviews and fewer, complex cases. A member of the mental health team attends initial suicide and self-harm (ACCT) reviews. The individual is then allocated to the caseload. The work of the mental health team continued throughout the pandemic, despite the cramped working conditions for the team and lack of appropriate interview rooms on the wings. Eight prisoners have been transferred to mental health hospitals during the year. The length of time from being accepted to transfer ranged from less than a week to more than 20 weeks.

Mental health facilities remain a concern.

### **6.4 Social care**

Social care assessments are provided by Durham County Council. There are currently three social care plans in place. Whilst healthcare staff manage care plans as well as they are able within a high security environment, the IMB continues to be concerned about the provision of social care where the physical environment is so unsuitable. Prisoners alternate regularly between their wing and the in-patient unit (see section 5.1 on cell suitability for wheelchair occupants).

Dementia care services remain a concern.

### **6.5 Exercise, regime**

Although the pandemic inevitably resulted in a more restricted regime, every prisoner had daily access to a shower, phone call, exercise, meal collection and, where appropriate, medication. Additional measures were introduced to counteract the inevitable longer periods in cells, with many continuing following the removal of Covid restrictions.

These included:

- TVs provided for basic prisoners
- electronic devices (including Xboxes, PlayStations and DVD players) allowed for standard prisoners
- a weekly prison newsletter with in-cell exercises, quizzes and national/local updates
- additional phone credit
- approved distraction packs (including DVDs, CDs and console games) could be sent in by families

Other measures are reported in section 7.1.

There is a gym for over 50s facilitated by Age UK.

HMP Frankland's PE department provides a monthly newsletter, which is made available on the wings. This forum is used to share with anyone in the prison developments and opportunities in the department. The newsletter contains workout details for the month, articles ranging from recipe ideas and others relating to a full range of health and wellbeing information.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

The drug and alcohol recovery team (DART) has continued to provide support for prisoners throughout the pandemic through one-to-one support and written communications. An example of its innovative response to rising cases was the production of a memo to over 830 prisoners in under 24 hours providing guidance and support. The DART coffee mornings, in partnership with the library services, is a positive example of the supportive and preventative strategies adopted, including group work. All prisoners are seen as part of the induction process. Referrals are also made by the mental health team, offender managers and key workers. Prisoners at various stages of recovery receive support from the team. Support is also provided by peer mentors. The peer mentoring scheme is back up and running following Covid restrictions, with plans in place to train more and increase capacity.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

A range of activities is gradually being reintroduced as restrictions are eased. For example, representatives of the charity Fine Cell Work returned to the establishment towards the end of the year. Prisoners have produced some excellent items of needlework and take a real pride in what they do. There is also a range of opportunities for prisoners to develop their interpersonal skills. These include acting as a 'buddy' for those who are less mobile, becoming a Listener (with support from the Samaritans) for prisoners in crisis, and representing their wing or landing on the prisoner consultative committee (see section 7.1 for further evidence of provision).

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

After a period of instability due to Covid, the last year allowed a return to normality within education. The provider for this prison is still Milton Keynes College, which had been very supportive during Covid restrictions.

The education department has 28 staff. It is fully staffed and there have been no problems with recruitment.

In year 4 of the prison education framework contract, April 2022 to March 2023, there were 398 learners enrolled on to 374 accredited qualifications and 24 non-accredited qualifications. There was an overall achievement rate of 74% and a retention rate of 100%.

Learners have worked towards 191 functional skills qualifications, from entry 1 level to level 2 in both maths and English.

In last year's report it was mentioned that a new server had been installed and due to a failure to provide sufficient back-up some records had been lost. It is good that there was a minimum of data lost and all problems have been resolved with the new system in place.

Some initiatives brought in during Covid are being continued. These include blended learning (through the use of in-cell packs) and the provision of education for high-profile prisoners, who are restricted to their cells. This allows those prisoners who might be in separation or in the MPU to receive educational provision and do exams. High-risk prisoners who are unable to leave their wing are receiving accredited delivery via the use of classroom mentors and course tutors.

Those prisoners with learning difficulties are supported by one-to-one tuition. They also benefit from the valuable contribution of an inclusion practitioner and a full time learning support assistant. Outreach education is not so prevalent with the return to classroom teaching. The whole of the curriculum is now accredited. It is pleasing to report that two prisoners have qualified to provide teaching support and they are now in the classroom working with those teachers who had been involved in their training.

Peer mentors have also now returned to education and workshops

As a result of the last Ofsted inspection, there is now a joined-up strategy between the prison and Milton Keynes College to provide a united approach to the development of reading skills within the prison population.

Good liaison exists between education officers and wing officers. There are also good links with the offender management unit (OMU). This is especially beneficial for prisoners in the drawing up of transfer plans.

There is a pride in achievement and it was wonderful to hear that three prisoners from Frankland had received a Platinum Award in the Koestler Awards. Their work will be exhibited in London.

The education department has liaised with the chaplaincy to provide activities on family days for children and their parents.

The department is awaiting an internal quality review to be carried out by Milton Keynes College. In the last review provision was rated as good.

There are three libraries in Frankland Prison, all run by Durham Council. The libraries employ prisoners as orderlies and each wing has a library representative. They play an active role in the work of the library. The fact that Durham County Council is responsible for the service provided has meant that a huge number of books and resources have become available to the libraries, including foreign language books and books reflecting different cultures, which otherwise may not have been available. If a book is listed anywhere within the County Durham library structure it can be supplied to this prison.

During the period of Covid, copies of an in-house magazine were sent to each wing to maintain links with prisoners. This has been discontinued and new books and materials are displayed effectively and attractively within the library. There is also a supply of audio CDs to allow prisoners who have difficulty reading an opportunity to enjoy a book/novel. Some games to be used with consoles can be borrowed.

The main aim of the library service is to increase the number attending, especially emergent readers. Many initiatives have been introduced to promote this. On an IMB visit, coffee mornings arranged with DART were being held, using the social occasion to integrate this with an important message regarding substance abuse.

Liaison with the chaplaincy has resulted in family days, during which the children receive books appropriate to their age and reading ability.

Other plans to increase involvement include:

- approaching prisoners working in workshops and trying to involve them
- producing a brochure showing what a library can provide
- a set of books which are changed monthly, providing new reading materials
- a Reader of the Month award in each library, with prizes and certificates

Story Book Dads is a scheme by which a dad in prison selects a book and reads this book out loud so it can be recorded. The recording is taken away and edited, sometimes by adding sound effects or background noises. The dad can add a short message at the start of the book, and the recording is presented to the child. Of course there is close liaison with the OMU to ensure that in cases where a parent is not allowed to contact a child that parent is not allowed to participate.

A disabled/pensioner group has been set up in the main library. This allows prisoners to meet, read, talk and play games such as chess. It has proved to be very popular for the 16 prisoners who attend. Sets of chess pieces have been purchased to expand its use.

It is hoped to set up a mood busting group in admin 3 library which, while it will be open to all, will be aimed at younger prisoners. Groups are mixed and are made up

of participants from several wings. Another interesting plan is to develop a small group aimed at prisoners who are reluctant to leave their cells.

The Shannon Trust is a registered charity, which works across all UK prisons to train and inspire prisoners who can read to teach those that can't. Each year, it helps thousands of people in prison to learn to read, so that they can build a different, more positive future for themselves and their families. Sessions are one-to-one and take place outside formal education. Learners work at their own pace. It is hoped to develop an area where mentors and mentees can work.

In each of the three libraries there are book clubs consisting of 12 prisoners. These are very popular and there is a large waiting list of those who want to attend. The well-known novel *Pygmalion* is the next book to be studied, and a leading academic, Professor Simon Jones (Durham University), will be coming in to work with the prisoners. The links with the university are further strengthened by the Inside Out initiative, involving a group of criminology students from Durham University attending and working with the prisoners.

An outside event which the library is involved in is the Durham Book Festival. The prison receives multiple copies of a selected book (*The Big Read*). The book distribution is supported by visits from authors. There is a possibility that a very high profile author might be visiting Frankland.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

There are several high-quality workshops in operation, where significant craft and workplace skills can be developed under a team of highly qualified staff, who command respect from prisoners due to their expertise and enthusiasm for their trade.

Prisoners wanting to undertake either full-time or part-time employment within the workshops submit an application to the activity hub and are then assigned a suitable workplace. Prisoners can request to transfer between workshops with approval from relevant staff as well as gain qualifications in their chosen trade.

During the reporting year, the IMB has been concerned with the number of days workshops have been closed due to heating issues. Legally, prisoners are unable to work in environments of less than 16°C, and problems with the heating system have resulted in numerous closures, specifically the furniture craft workshop, which has reported heating issues since November 2022 and has had the most closures across all workshops in the establishment. The IMB understands that repair work has taken place in an attempt to rectify the issue; however, this problem continues to persist without any indication of when it is likely to be fully resolved. This is impacting on prisoners who are wanting to work and currently unable to do so due to the temperatures.

Overall, prisoners speak highly of the staff within the workshops and generally appear to enjoy working there. The IMB recognises the hard work of staff and prisoners alike and is, as always, impressed with work produced.

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

The OMU is made up of two senior probation officers and 15 prison/probation offender managers (POMs), each with a case load of approximately 75 prisoners. There are 12 probation POMs at present, and three prison POMs. There are three vacancies, two full time and one part time. The part-time post cannot be filled due to the individual being in a temporary promotion post elsewhere.

Probation POMs can work from home one day per week. Prison POMs are unable to do so due to their operational status.

There are five administrative staff (three full time and two part time), one of whom will be leaving shortly. This is a significant decrease compared to the situation a year ago, when there were 10 members of staff. A staff member also works in population management. This member of staff will be leaving, and his replacement has already been trained.

Last year it was reported that there had been a backlog of OASys (offender assessment system) reviews. There has been a small reduction in this number over the year, but staff vacancies have limited improvement, as well as more assessments coming into scope for reviews. Community offender managers are doing overtime to reduce the backlog; however, this is optional.

All prisoners are allocated a POM within 48 hours of arriving in Frankland and an initial contact/induction meeting is held within 10 working days of this.

National standards are being utilised within the prison. In June 2021, a national standards document was published. Under this document, there are new offender management in custody (OMIC) POM supervision standards for cases. The purpose of these new standards is to provide formal guidance to POMs regarding supervision expectations during the custodial element of a prisoner's sentence. This is seen to strengthen the management of a prisoner's supervision period in the custodial setting, by focusing the POM on important touchpoints throughout the sentence.

Cases are seen more frequently by POMs at certain points throughout sentence, for example during the period leading up to parole, following parole refusal, when delivering bespoke interventions to address risk of harm and offending behaviour issues, at the time of handover preparation to the community and release planning, and also if there are concerns regarding mental health or wellbeing.

These new standards allow the POM to exercise professional judgement regarding how often prisoners need to be seen and the length of these supervision sessions. This will be decided based not only on the risk and need, but also on where the prisoner is in terms of critical stages of his sentence.

A notice was sent to prisoners regarding the changes in contact, and a senior probation officer attended the prisoner consultation committee to advise prior to the changes being implemented.

POMs still have contact with prisoners via the application process.

The OMU has established positive links with education/library services, DART, safer custody, key workers and NEPACs, who actually have a desk in the OMU office.

Some of the main priorities for the coming year are:

- reduction of the backlog of OASys reviews
- quality and delivery of key work
- young adults action plan.

While preparations for release or removal are often not a priority for many prisoners in Frankland, the OMU continues to provide advice and guidance to help prisoners during their sentence. It also works closely with psychology, which provides accredited programmes.

## **7.4 Family contact**

Maintenance of good family links, subject to security considerations, is an important priority. The area used for visits can cater for 21 prisoners at a time. Places are often all (or almost all) taken, with family days proving to be incredibly popular. The Board's experience of visits is that they are well-organised and well-run events, with prison staff and visitors well supported by the NEPACs team. In-person visits take place between 2pm and 4pm.

Social visits can be booked either online or via telephone and take place every afternoon, excluding Mondays. Prisoners wanting to book a place on family days can do so by submitting an application form. These run throughout the year, with particular popularity during summer and in the run-up to Christmas. The Board attended several family days and was impressed with the organisation and good atmosphere. Legal visits take place every Tuesday and allow prisoners to communicate with their legal teams.

Social video calls were established during the Covid-19 pandemic, and these continue to take place. Prisoners wanting to arrange a social video call can do so by submitting an application form. These calls are well monitored, with prisoners reporting that it is a good way to communicate with loved ones not able to visit the establishment.

Legal visits take place every Tuesday and Thursday.

The Board understands in-cell telephone work is due to commence during 2023, which will continue to allow prisoners to maintain good contact with loved ones.

Transport links to the establishment are still a concern, with one bus running between the city centre and prison every hour. The last bus to leave from outside the prison to return to the city centre is at 5.33pm, meaning those who miss the 4.33pm bus service after leaving visits are forced either to book a taxi or to wait an hour for the last bus service. No public transport runs on a Sunday, meaning visitors who rely on public transport are forced to make alternative transport arrangements to the prison.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

(see section 7.3 – offender management and progression)

The strategies in this high security prison in respect of resettlement planning centre around rehabilitation and preparation for recategorisation consideration. Education and training provision does enable prisoners to gain qualifications and skills that are useful upon release. Very few prisoners in HMP Frankland are released into the community.



## 8. The work of the IMB

The reduction of Covid restrictions has enabled the IMB to return to normal monitoring during the reporting period. The prison is very effective in notifying the IMB regarding issues arising and admissions to the MPU. The work of the IMB has been enhanced by an improved circulation of prison daily staff briefings to IMB members. This has enabled the monitoring to be more focused at times. The Board has been under pressure due to member unavailability at times, resulting in more responses to applications being provided by letter. The Board plans three training days each year to look at monitoring improvement, using the IMB monitoring toolkits to discuss best practice. The Board is well supported by the prison leadership, with regular Governor attendance at monthly Board meetings. Responses to monitoring rota reports are provided and questions from members are a regular feature of the meeting. Key prison staff are invited to the meeting to update members regarding prison practice. A recent security update is an example.

The Board trains new IMB members. This takes time, but is an essential part of our role.

The Board is fortunate to have excellent support from our IMB clerk.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	18
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	263
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line*	0
Total number of segregation reviews attended	21

\*if relevant

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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives, sanctions	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>
C	Equality	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
F	Food and kitchens	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>
H1	Property within this establishment	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>
K	Transfers	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	<b>21</b>	<b>90</b>
	Total number of applications	<b>175</b>	<b>278</b>

The increase in prisoner applications to the IMB this year is a result of the return to normal regime, following the restricted regime in place during the previous year due to Covid.



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