



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

**For reporting year  
1 January 2022 – 31 December 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/YOI Isis – named after the River Thames – opened in July 2010. It is a public sector training prison for convicted men. In 2020 the prison started to implement the young adult strategy, moving to being a prison for young adults between 18 and 21 years, and category C adults up to 27 years. In December 2022, the proportion of prisoners between 18 and 27 was over 95%.

The prison is situated in Thamesmead, in south-east London. The certified normal accommodation is 478, and the operational capacity – that is, the maximum population that it can safely and decently hold, is 628. In December 2022 the population was around 600.

The following provide services within the prison:

- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare and Oxleas Interventions provides support to those with substance misuse issues.
- Novus is the education provider.
- Library services are provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
- Mitie provides comprehensive facilities management, including catering.
- Charitable or voluntary organisations working within the prison include the Shannon Trust, Switchback, Kinetics, Belong, Bounceback, Atrium, St Mungo's, Samaritans, Trailblazers, Forward Trust, Guildhall/Untold, Pact, Synergy, Gallowglass, Goldsmiths College and Shaw Trust.

Prisoners are accommodated in two houseblocks, Thames and Meridian, each comprising a central hub and four spurs. Each spur can accommodate over 70 prisoners, on three levels. Each spur has a servery, and outside each is an exercise yard with fitness equipment. Each houseblock has a laundry, operated by laundry orderlies.

In a block opposite the houseblocks is the Academy, with 19 classrooms and a capacity in excess of 200; the Skill Zone, with six workshops; the library; the healthcare unit and the multifaith suite. Separately, there is a well-equipped gym, able to accommodate 40 prisoners; a cardiovascular studio; an indoor sports hall and two outdoor astroturf pitches. The kitchen is managed by Mitie, with a workforce that includes over 20 prisoners.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

Evidence comes from a range of sources including observations made on visits, the scrutiny of records and data, attendance at prison meetings, informal contact with prisoners and staff and communication with prisoners following applications made to the Board. The Board remains grateful for the helpful cooperation of prison staff at all levels within the establishment.

The impact of Covid declined at the start of the year and most protective measures were ended by March, though the prison took the decision to maintain, for reasons of safety, the changes that it had introduced to prison life and the regime. Staffing shortages, in all areas, increased during the year and these shortages have affected every aspect of prison life and the support and activities available to prisoners.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

Reception areas are generally clean, although the cleanliness of the holding room toilet facilities needs more attention. Prisoners are treated with decency and respect throughout the arrival and searching procedures. Initial health and prisoner safety checks are carried out prior to the transfer to the induction spur. Towards the end of the year the induction programme returned to being more structured and organised. (4.1)

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2022 decreased to an average of eight per month (compared to an average of 12 in 2021). The quality of ACCTs remains variable. There was an encouraging drop in self-harm during the reporting period, with an average of 16 incidents per month, down from an average in the 2021 reporting period of 34 per month. (4.2)

HMIP concluded at its inspection visit in August 2022 that 'the rate of violence remained too high'. Use of force and violence both showed a decreasing trend through the year, with use of force decreasing by 38% and violence by 17% over the course of the year. Use of force was 8% less than the previous year. There were 244 assaults on prisoners in 2022 and 97 assaults on staff. Prison figures show that approximately a quarter of the violence occurs on the induction spur where new arrivals are managed for several days, before moving to other areas of the prison. There are a number of factors which affect the levels of violence and assaults, including the young age of the population, the level of gang membership and churn within the population. The prison is preparing an updated safety strategy. (4.3)

Reports of drug use increased significantly in 2022 with 140 incidents reported. The vast majority of these reports were a 'smell of cannabis'. There was also a rise in the number of contraband finds in 2022, including 145 mobile phones, 129 weapons and 45 alcohol finds. In part, this has resulted from an increased use of intelligence-led searches in 2022. (4.5)

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

Checks made by the Board indicate that standards of cleanliness fluctuated during the year. The serveries need closer attention to raise the standard of hygiene and cleanliness and servery workers should aim to, and be allowed to, complete their work prior to evening lockdown. (5.1)

There were difficulties in assessing cell bell answering times although a system to routinely capture and act upon this data was achieved towards the end of the year. (5.1)

The IMB has previously expressed concern at the number of badly fitting cell windows which have design problems, resulting in windows that are either jammed open or closed. This has been a problem since shortly after the prison opened and has not been resolved. (5.1)

Fewer prisoners were segregated than in 2021 and of those that were there was a lower percentage of young adults and significantly fewer men held there on ACCTs. The special accommodation was not used at all in 2022. Although the unit is kept clean and generally maintained to a good standard, it suffers the same issue with broken windows and in the winter months cells did get very cold.

Key work has suffered significantly, because of staffing difficulties. After some improvement in early 2022 there has been little delivery in subsequent months. Cross-deployment to mainstream prison officer duties because of staffing shortages impacts on the time available for equality roles. Equality is considered as an integral part of the safer custody, use of force and equality meeting. (5.3 & 5.4)

It has been a turbulent year in the multifaith chaplaincy with services and activities not yet fully restored since Covid. In addition, demands on prison officers' availability, restricted regimes, increased violence and gang affiliations, have all contributed to prisoners not being able to attend regular weekly faith services. Faith group activities have not taken place. Holding Friday prayers has been challenging with Muslim prisoners only being able to attend prayers every other week which, because of a serious incident, had to reduce to once every six weeks. (5.5)

The regime in place during 2022 has provided two and a half hours out of cell each day for all prisoners. There are no out of cell activities in the evening. At the end of the year, the regime ended at 5.30p.m. It is the IMB's concern that this amount of time in cell becomes normalised and there are not sufficient efforts to return the prison to a properly staffed full regime. (6.5)

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

The overarching leadership and oversight of health provision were assessed as effective by HMIP in September. (6.1)

The prison carries out assessments and screenings on all new arrivals. Reception and secondary screening (health and wellbeing screening) are undertaken by a multidisciplinary team. ACCT reviews are attended by a member of the mental health team and the team conducts a weekly segregation mental health welfare check on prisoners in segregation. (6.1)

Primary care is provided through a range of GP, nurse and specialist clinics. HMIP assessed that waiting times for all health provision were acceptable, except for the optician. (6.2)

The mental health team provides psychological interventions, mental health in-reach, psychiatry, counselling and occupational therapy. Waiting times for in-reach, psychiatry, counselling and psychological interventions were assessed as good, but it could take up to eight weeks for an initial triage for those requesting mental health input. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and learning disability pathways are in place, as are the stepped care model of psychological interventions, counselling and accessible psychiatry. An occupational therapist has been appointed this year and it is planned that speech and language therapy and social work will form part of this new model. (6.3)

Oxleas interventions provide one to one and group work support for those with substance misuse issues. The caseload has ranged from 205 clients to 284 during the year. (6.6)

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

HMP/YOI Isis offers 192 spaces in education for more than 600 prisoners, and contracts Novus to deliver the education and training programmes. The prisoners have the opportunity to complete entry level, level 1 or level 2 mathematics and English. The expectation for these learners is that they complete the equivalent of ten guided learning hours (GLH) per week, comprising a 2.5-hour tutor session in a classroom and the completion of in-cell packs for the remaining 7.5 hours. These prisoners also get thirty-minutes to use the library facilities every week. There is not yet sufficient evidence to determine the impact of this model on prisoners' success rates. (7.1)

Approximately two thirds of the prisoners at HMP/YOI Isis have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), but the number may be higher as prisoners have the right not to disclose information to the education team regarding any learning difficulty that they may possess. Twenty-one percent of prisoners have social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), which is the most prevalent learning difficulty at HMP Isis, followed by speech, language and communication needs which forms 11% of the learners with LDD. (7.1)

The HMIP inspection including an Ofsted inspection highlighted areas of concern that the IMB has been reporting throughout this year. The report judges the provision of purposeful activity at Isis to be poor. As few as 18% of prisoners may be involved in purposeful activity out of cells during a morning or afternoon session. The IMB concurs with and supports the findings of the Ofsted team with regard to the provision of vocational training and work and believes that the provision for prisoners is poor due to underutilisation and a lack of focus on the teaching of skills that are in demand in UK businesses. (7.2)

Attendance, uptake and success on all courses varies. Information regarding the levels of success, attainment and completion in courses is hard to secure and therefore comparisons with the data for the previous years and thus evidence of improvements is impossible to give here. Novus provided 18 skills courses as of

November 2022 with 468 learners enrolled. Actual success rates vary from 50% to 100%. HMPPS provision covers those industry and employment programmes necessary to the prison; of these waste management industry training advisory board (WAMITAB ) qualifications have a consistently high pass rate for prisoners. (7.2)

The offender management unit (OMU) has been understaffed all year and Band 4 prison offender managers (POMs) are often cross-deployed, impacting the work POMs are able to complete. Prison officers on the spurs have been unable to carry out key work, with the POMs picking up some of this work. The situation is exacerbated by a high churn of prisoners on short sentences. There is a backlog of OASys reports, estimated to be about 80 at the end of 2022. There is also a backlog in recategorising prisoners, around 100 at the end of 2022. (7.3)

The Thinking Skills Programme is the only accredited programme running to reduce reoffending. There are no accredited interventions that address, for instance, domestic abuse (BBR) or violence (Kaizen). (7.3)

There were 527 men released in 2022. Prison officers and probation officers in the prison manage the release of prisoners, with local probation officers dealing with the higher risk offenders (up to 40 percent of the prison population in Isis). (7.5)

There are a number of initiatives and courses in the prison to prepare prisoners for release and some organisations providing direct services. Because of the disparate nature of the array of services provided on and after release, there is a lack of available statistics on the situation of prisoners released from Isis. (7.5)

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

The IMB believes that the most important development for prisoners at HMP/YOI Isis is to ensure that all prisoners have as much time out of cell as possible, including time in the evening and at weekends. When out of cell they should have access to education, vocational programmes and work and have the programmes, staff and agencies that will support their rehabilitation and resettlement. This overarching aim needs to be an accepted priority for the Minister, the prison service and the prison.

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

- Require that the amount of churn i.e., the frequency that prisoners are moved around the prison estate, is reduced, so that prisoners arriving at HMP/YOI Isis have enough of their sentence remaining to enable them to benefit from the training and rehabilitation activities of the prison and for the prison to provide appropriate preparation for release.
- Support the Prison Service in the development and implementation of an effective workforce strategy by ensuring that the pay and conditions of prison officers are attractive when compared against similar professions.



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

- As highlighted in previous reports there is the need for a workforce strategy, that addresses the issues of recruitment, attrition and availability.
- A solution to the broken windows in prisoners' cells needs to be found and funded.
- Having published a Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, ensure that it is fully implemented and adhered to.
- Require prisons receiving prisoners from the courts to complete an OASys report before a prisoner is transferred.
- Provide an assessment of the impact of the changed arrangements for the resettlement of prisoners on their prospects of securing housing, employment and education.

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

- Provide training and/or supervision of officers completing ACCT documents to ensure consistently accurate good quality entries.
- Continue the development of data and information that provides live information on participation in purposeful activities.
- Ensure that the prison can show the outcomes for prisoners of the education model adopted for education programmes. Also use data to improve the focus on teaching outcomes for prisoners and their employability on release.
- Work to ensure the full use of the skills zone facilities.
- Monitor, using data, the approach across the prison to answering cell bells.
- As soon as practical resume weekly faith services. Require the chaplaincy to provide regular information to prisoners on the work and activities provided by the chaplaincy.
- Provide a wider range of accredited programmes for prisoners to help them address issues prior to release or facilitate moves to prisons where these programmes are available.

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

2021 was dominated by the impact of Covid. In 2022 the impact of Covid is not a major consideration and therefore comparison is of limited benefit.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

The prison has a safer custody function which collected comprehensive data on all aspects of safety, violence, and drug use. Until July 2022, a detailed report was produced monthly with this data, but has not been available at the same level of detail since the analyst responsible left the prison. Monthly multidisciplinary safer custody, use of force and equalities meetings are held; the IMB attends some of these as an observer.

To enable year on year comparisons, data has been supplemented in 2022 with that from the prison's safety diagnostic tool although exact definitions for assaults may differ between the two sources.

#### **4.1 Reception and Induction**

Young men between the ages of 18 and 27 are transferred to Isis from a reception prison and not direct from court. As part of a pilot scheme, some men of the same age category who are convicted and awaiting sentencing are also sent to Isis.

The total number of transfers into Isis during 2022 totalled 982, compared to 797 in 2021 and 624 in 2020. Reception of prisoners usually takes place three times a week, although this has varied throughout the year.

Reception areas are generally clean, although the cleanliness of the holding room toilet facilities needs more attention. Prisoners are treated with decency and respect throughout the arrival and searching procedures. Initial health and prisoner safety checks are carried out prior to the transfer to the induction spur where new prisoners are located for between two and four weeks before being transferred to a permanent suitable spur within the prison. HMIP felt that the reception processes were slow, with only 35% of prisoners responding to the survey stating that they spent less than two hours in reception.

There has been short staffing across the prison resulting in staff often being cross-deployed to fill gaps on houseblock duties. This affects reception negatively as there are fewer staff available for escorts and distribution of property to prisoners. Staff endeavour to issue property that is in store as quickly as possible, however delays did occur due to this predicament.

## **Inductions**

First night procedures are well covered and prisoner representatives on the induction spur and staff are welcoming. A trained prisoner Listener is available to give emotional support if needed. An evening meal is provided and where time permits a shower is offered, but many new arrivals do not have the opportunity to shower until the following day. First night welfare checks are carried out hourly.

Secondary health screening takes place the following day together with induction sessions which are held in the chaplaincy suite from various key departments, other agencies and prisoner-led peers who, in addition, provide instruction on the use of the biometrics facilities. A member of the safer custody team also carries out a secondary interview focused on the prisoner's safety concerns and issues.

During the first week education assessment and gym inductions also take place. There is a follow-up from induction representatives after five days to assist with any further questions or concerns.

Induction procedures in the early part of the year were fragmented. Since then, however, improved arrangements have been implemented.

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

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2022 decreased to an average of eight per month (compared to an average of 12 in 2021). The quality of ACCTs remains variable, with some up to date and others missing entries, particularly the detail around good quality conversations and interactions. This has been highlighted in our weekly rota reports to the prison.

There was an encouraging drop in self-harm during the reporting period, with an average of 15 incidents per month, down from 34 per month in 2021.

The Samaritans-led Listener programme was quite active during 2022 with an average of over 19 call outs per month during the year. While the number of Listeners fluctuated during the year, there were nine at the end of the year. The top five reasons for call outs were family, drug or alcohol misuse, mental health or illness, isolation or loneliness, and relationship problems.

There were no deaths in custody during 2022.

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

In our annual report for 2021, we highlighted that levels of violence were a concern and, in 2022, levels remained very similar. HMIP also concluded at its inspection visit in August 2022 that 'the rate of violence remained too high'.

The annual data from the safety diagnostic tool (SDT) records that there were 244 assaults on prisoners in 2022, compared to a total of 238 prisoner assaults and fights recorded by the prison analyst in 2021. In addition, comparing SDT figures for

2022 with analyst figures for 2021, there were 97 assaults on staff in 2022, compared to 132 in 2021.

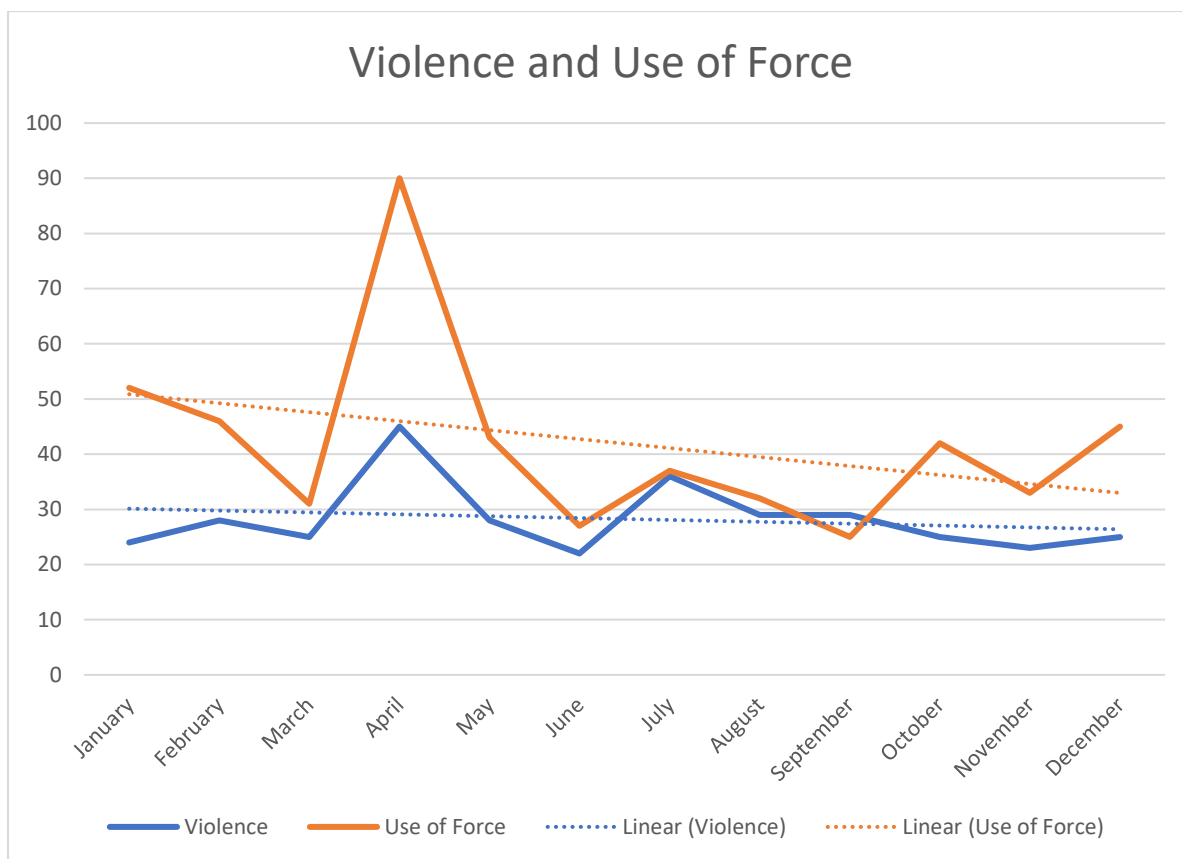
There are a number of factors which affect the levels of violence and assaults, including: the population being mainly 27 years old or younger, with 83% of prisoners being 18 to 25 years old; the proportion of prisoners who are members of gangs (around 50%); and the number of gangs that prisoners belong to (in August 2022 there were 152 known gangs within the prison). The increased churn of prisoners entering and leaving the prison, and the small number of convicted but unsentenced prisoners also contributes to levels of violence. Prison figures show that approximately a quarter of the violence occurs on the induction spur where new arrivals are managed, before moving to other areas of the prison. Also, reducing Covid restrictions gradually meant more interaction between prisoners, although cohorting (managing prisoners for activities in groups of 35 or so) remained at the end of the year.

There were some worrying incidents of violence towards the end of the year, with over 20 prisoners involved in an incident prior to Friday prayers in early December. Also, for the first time in 2022, PAVA spray needed to be used the following day by an officer to subdue a prisoner with an improvised weapon. December saw a total of nine assaults on staff and 16 on prisoners.

In response to the HMIP comments highlighted above, the prison is preparing an updated safety strategy.

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

Violence and use of force continue to be high at HMP/YOI Isis, and the HMIP inspection report said that '[t]he number of times that force had been used against prisoners continued to be high and was much higher than similar prisons'. However, use of force and violence both showed a decreasing trend through the year, as shown in the graph below, with use of force decreasing by 38% and violence by 17%. Use of force was 8% less than the previous year. There was a total of 339 violent incidents during the year, fewer than the previous year (371) despite the increasing proportion of prisoners under the age of 25, and similar to the pre-lockdown 2019 figure (313 incidents).



Routine use of body worn video cameras (BWVCs) was steady over the course of the year: on average 39 BWVCs were routinely taken each month. Some footage was available for an average of 80% of incidents, compared to 84% last year, and 37% included footage from before the start of the incident. Footage is reviewed at a weekly management meeting which usually results in one or two officers being given advice about best practice. The backlog of use of force paperwork increased over the course of the year, averaging 224.

## 4.5 Preventing Illicit Items

Statistics are compiled by the prison monthly on illicit items, including drug use, and reviewed at the safety/use of force/equalities meeting. The full body scanner in reception aims to ensure any illegal items are identified when new prisoners transfer into Isis. All incoming post and parcels are tested, all staff and official visitors enter through airport style security, and dogs, an X-ray machine and an itemiser are used to check all goods delivered to the prison.

Reports of drug use increased significantly in 2022 with 141 incidents reported, compared to 39 in 2021. Most of these reports are a 'smell of cannabis' when an officer is patrolling on the wings, but they appear to indicate that cannabis is entering the prison, which is of concern to the IMB.

There was also an alarming rise in the number of contraband finds in 2022, including 145 mobile phones, 129 weapons and 46 alcohol finds. In part, this has resulted from an increased use of intelligence-led searches in 2022.

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

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

The prison makes routine checks once a fortnight on the standards of hygiene and cleanliness in the two houseblocks and attention is drawn to the areas of concern. Checks made by the Board indicate that standards fluctuated during the year and are not always up to a high level of cleanliness. In particular, in the serveries members reported on several occasions that the remains of the evening meal had been left out overnight, together with unwashed trays and serving counters which encourages vermin. The serveries need closer attention to raise the standard of hygiene and cleanliness and servery workers should aim to, and be allowed to, complete their work prior to evening lockdown.

The cleanliness of the food trollies which are returned to the kitchen after use had somewhat improved during the latter part of the year.

The servery workers wear PPE and maintain food hygiene standards. Hand washing facilities and paper towels are provided and food temperatures are recorded prior to serving meals. New servery counters and dishwashers have been installed.

Each houseblock has its own laundry with semi-industrial washing machines and driers, where prisoners can have their personal clothing washed once a week. Each spur has a laundry orderly. Replacement kit, bedding and towels are maintained in stock.

For use during time out of cell, new table tennis tables have been provided or are on order for all spurs.

IMB members on rota noticed cell bells ringing for longer than five minutes. HMIP reported that only 14% of survey respondents said their cell bell was answered within five minutes, against the comparator for similar prisons of 35%. Cell bell answering times are recorded by computer. There were difficulties in accessing the information and a system to routinely capture and act upon this data was achieved towards the end of the year.

Vermin control is maintained, and Mitie continues to be responsive to maintenance requirements. Flooring has been replaced in a small number of cells but the general condition in many areas of the spurs is in need of attention. It is anticipated, budget permitting, that the flooring of the spur landings will be replaced in 2023.

The IMB has previously expressed concern at the number of badly fitting cell windows which have design problems, resulting in windows that are either jammed open, resulting in exceptionally cold cells during winter, or stuck closed, resulting in very hot cells during the hot weather. This has been a problem since shortly after the prison opened and has not been resolved.

The resin toilet pans in cells are badly stained and as previously reported solutions have proved inadequate. However, in August, a toilet cleaning contract was awarded and improvements have been made to reception and the multifaith chaplaincy and a few cells but progress has been slow. New toilet seats have been installed in all spurs.

## **5.2 Segregation**

The segregation unit has 16 cells, plus two for special accommodation. An average of 29 prisoners were segregated each month in 2022, with notable peaks in January and April (the monthly average was 32 in 2021). During 2022, 351 prisoners were segregated, of whom 97 were young adults (YAs) (2021 – 382 and 128).

In 2022 four prisoners were held in the segregation unit for longer than 42 days. In each instance, due process was followed with the prison group director authorising the continued detainment.

The number of prisoners on an ACCT held in the unit, in 2022, was 17, a significant reduction on the 2021 number of 35, and none of these were YAs. The decision to hold such prisoners in the segregation unit is always made by a governor and is subject to review.

Of the 351 held in segregation over the year there were 93 under good order or discipline (GOOD) rules, of whom 18 were YAs (2021 – 62 and 22). The increase was due to new arrivals whose body scanner results indicated the presence of illicit substances, being placed on GOoD until they were clear and could be sent to the houseblock. The segregation unit statistics and trends are given careful consideration at the segregation management and review group (SMARG) meetings, including considering the adult/YA and ethnicity split against the total Isis population.

Neither the special accommodation nor the dirty protest cell was used in 2022.

Adjudications are held in the segregation unit and heard by the governor on duty. It has been difficult for the IMB to be present at many GOoD reviews as no regular time for them has been established, but adjudications observed have been well managed and documented. Adjudications were heard for 2,120 charges in 2022 of which 93 were referred to the independent adjudicator and 53 to the police (often with multiple charges against the same prisoner).

With occasional exceptions the relationships between officers and prisoners in the segregation unit have been observed to be good. Prisoners have a clear understanding of the regime and expectations and officers seek to help them with, for example, in-cell activities.

The unit is kept clean and generally maintained to a good standard. During the winter months, however, the segregation unit cells did get very cold and extra blankets were not always available. The inability to fix the broken windows is as much a problem in the unit as in the houseblocks, but those detained in the segregation unit have no opportunity for time out of cell except for domestics and exercise.

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

Key work has suffered significantly, because of staffing difficulties. After some improvement in early 2022 there has been little delivery in subsequent months. The prison introduced a revised approach, with prisoners being allocated a key worker on their home spur, but this has not improved key work delivery, because of the lack of available staff. By the end of the year the prison was using entries on p-NOMIS as an indicator of prisoner-staff interactions.

In general, IMB members have reported that prison officers manage difficult and tense incidents with prisoners in a measured and professional manner. Observed relations between prisoners and staff appear to be amiable and constructive. But cross-deployment of staff to spurs where they do not know the prisoners is a barrier to the development of constructive relations.

In the HMIP prisoner survey 58% prisoners stated they were treated with respect and 63% said there were staff who they could go to if they had a problem.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

Day-to-day management of the function is the responsibility of an equality manager and an equality officer. Cross-deployment to mainstream prison officer duties because of staffing shortages impacts on the time available for equality roles. Equality is considered as an integral part of the safer custody, use of force and equality meeting. This enables understanding of the links between safety and the diverse and young population at Isis. The equality team has taken some practical, but important, actions to improve outcomes for prisoners, such as producing pictorial and translated menus and ensuring access to translation services.

At the end of 2022, over 83% of the prison population was 18 to 25. Seventy-five percent of prisoners were from black, Asian or other minority ethnic groups with 50.5% of prisoners of black ethnicity, 10% Asian and 9.5% mixed ethnicity. Forty-nine percent of prisoners were Muslim, with prisoners of Christian religions being 38% of the population. In November there were 85 prisoners with a physical disability. There were 172 prisoners who had a diagnosed mental disability or learning disability. Ninety-nine percent of the population describe themselves as heterosexual; this is likely to be overstated, reflecting how the information is collected and the confidence of individuals to declare their sexual orientation.

In 2022 the number of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) submitted was 49, by 28 different prisoners. Of these, 10 or 20.4% were upheld. All spurs had equality peer support. It is part of the representatives' role to support prisoners with discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs). HMIP confirmed that DIRFs were investigated to a good standard by the equality manager and included an interview with the prisoner who had submitted the DIRF.

During the year to November there were a total of 480 intelligence-led cell searches. For the eleven-month period there was no apparent disproportionality: the number of prisoners from all ethnic groups who had such cell searches were all within range when compared to the prison population.



Over the year the number of foreign national prisoners has gradually decreased – 111 in January 2022 compared to 72 in June and 56 in November. The number of IS91 detainees has continued at a similar level to 2021, ranging between 16 in February and 7 in August, September and October. IS91 allows people who have completed criminal sentences to continue to be held in prison under Immigration Act powers.

Prisoners who want to work must apply for jobs. Those who meet the specification are interviewed by a panel and if suitable are allocated to the post. This process aims to provide realistic work experience, minimise the possibility of favouritism and demonstrate to prisoners that a fair process is in place. In 2022 the prison grouped 'prime' jobs and monitored their allocation by ethnic group, religion and age. In November, 60.5% of jobs were allocated to black prisoners, who represent 50.5% of the total population. Prisoners with a Christian religion who make up 38% of the total population occupied 45% of jobs. All other groups were within range when compared to the prison population.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The population on 1 December 2022 (602 on roll) was as follows: 49% Muslim, 11% Roman Catholic, 27% Anglican & other Christian denominations, 10% no religion, 3% all other religions.

It has been a turbulent year in the multifaith chaplaincy. Faith services and other activities have not recovered fully from Covid. In addition, demands on prison officers' availability, restricted regimes, increased violence and gang affiliations have all contributed to prisoners not being able to attend regular weekly faith services. Faith group activities have not taken place, but in-cell packs were provided for prisoners wanting to learn more about their faith and Sycamore Tree, a six-week victim awareness course, was reintroduced in the late autumn and attended by 16 participants.

Holding Friday prayers has been challenging with Muslim prisoners, for most of the year, only being able to attend prayers every other week. In mid-December, Friday prayers were further curtailed, following a serious violent incident, resulting in the majority of prisoners being restricted to attending in spurts once every six weeks. It is concerning for the Board if this continues on a long-term basis.

The multifaith chaplaincy, led by a managing chaplain, has a total of 13 staff and is able to cover services for several denominations with an Anglican chaplain and Free Church pastor (now a combined service), a Roman Catholic priest, three Muslim imams, together with a representative covering the Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Jehovah's Witness and Rastafarian faiths. A new managing chaplain and Free Church minister were appointed during 2022.

The chaplaincy is an important part of prison life in Isis, delivering services, support and pastoral care to all the prisoners and contributing towards rehabilitation. However, there has been a lack of information in recent months regarding the

activities and work of the chaplaincy, compared with previous years. Regular information about activities organised by the chaplaincy would be beneficial to prisoners.

Various religious celebrations took place for Ramadan, Eid, Holi, Diwali, and Christmas; a Christmas carol service took place for the first time since before the Covid restrictions.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

The incentives policy was reviewed in July 2022 but remains broadly unchanged since 2018. In general, and for several years now, around 50% of prisoners have enhanced status at any given time. The number of prisoners on basic has reduced over the last year but often spikes if violence increases as it is closely aligned to the violence reduction policy. The number of positive and negative awards has a 40/60 split. Prisoners' perception is that positives are rare, and negatives used as a threat, but this is not necessarily borne out in evidence. It was the view of HMIP that despite regular reviews, prisoners often remained on basic for too long.

The number of prisoners from ethnic minorities in all three incentives bands is within range when compared to the prison population, except for the fact that black prisoners are overrepresented on basic. When considering religious belief, those who are enhanced is within range but for prisoners on basic Muslim prisoners are overrepresented.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The number of complaints reduced in 2022, with an average of just over 84 submitted each month. Complaints about property, canteen and adjudications are regularly the highest number of complaints each month. Of the complaints seen by members there is often evidence that the prisoner has received a verbal response before the written response. Complaint forms are consistently available alongside the complaints boxes. An average of 74% of complaints were responded to on time.

## **5.8 Property**

The publication of the long-awaited policy framework for the management of prisoners' property has had no effect on the continuing problem of prisoners' property not arriving with them when they transfer into the prison. It is disappointing that technology has not been introduced to manage and track prisoner property. Complaints about property are consistently one of the highest groups each month and one of the highest number of applications to the IMB (with 16 about property within the prison and 28 about property outside the prison in 2022). Delayed and lost property is not only upsetting for prisoners but also costly both in staff time and compensation.

Retrieving missing and excess property from transferring prisons remains an issue. Despite the policy framework stating that property must be sent to the receiving prison within four weeks, this does not always occur.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust is the provider for primary healthcare services, mental health and substance misuse services. Dental services are provided by Prisoner Centred Dental Care, and optometry by the Prison Opticians' Trust. The healthcare provided by the trust was part of the inspection by HMIP in September, but without the input of the CQC. The overarching leadership and oversight of health provision were assessed as effective. Health partnerships meet bimonthly at a local delivery board to review the health services provided and the management of operational challenges.

The prison carries out assessments and screenings on all new arrivals. Reception and secondary screening (health and wellbeing screening) are undertaken by a multidisciplinary team. ACCT reviews are attended by a member of the mental health team and the team conducts a weekly segregation mental health welfare check on prisoners in segregation.

There are 48.4 whole time equivalent (wte) staff providing services, including a mental health team of 4.2 wte, a primary care team of 19.5 wte and 18 wte interventions staff. This excludes medical staff.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

Primary care is provided through a range of GP, nurse and specialist clinics, such as podiatry, sexual health, optician, long-term conditions and blood-borne viruses. HMIP assessed that waiting times for all health provision were acceptable, except for the optician where waits were protracted, due to sickness. Prisoners receive medication at the treatment room on each houseblock, unless they are assessed as suitable to have prescribed medication in their cells.

### **6.3 Mental health**

The mental health team consists of psychological interventions, mental health in-reach, psychiatry, counselling (provided by Atrium) and occupational therapy. Patients with mental health needs are identified on arrival. Work is in progress to improve the identification of neurodiverse patients. In the HMIP survey, 45% of prisoners said that they had a mental health problem.

HMIP found that waiting times for in-reach, psychiatry, counselling and psychological interventions were good, but that it could take up to eight weeks for an initial triage for those requesting mental health input, which is too long for early intervention opportunities.

There is a weekly multidisciplinary team referral meeting and trauma-informed consultation with the wider prison for complex cases, segregated prisoners, assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCTs) and challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and learning disability pathways are in place, as are the stepped care model of psychological interventions, counselling and

accessible psychiatry. An occupational therapist has been appointed this year and it is planned that speech and language therapy and social work will form part of this new model.

Not all the very sick prisoners who needed to be transferred to hospital under the Mental Health Act were transferred within the nationally recommended timescales. Release plans were in place for mental health patients and contact made with community mental health services for those with continuing care needs.

#### **6.4 Social care**

Partnership working between Oxleas and the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) continues in providing support to those prisoners with social care needs. Change Grow Live (CGL) is responsible for delivering all social care defined in the support plans provided to them by RBG. Due to the young population the demand for social care support is small.

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

The prison has maintained cohorts for prisoners. In general, this has meant that each cohort of 35 prisoners do not mix with other prisoners during their time out of cell, with some exceptions such as social visits, that were organised by spur, faith services, that in later months were organised by houseblock, education, that is organised by spur, and skills workshops, that are organised by houseblock. The regime in place during 2022 has provided two and a half hours out of cell for all prisoners. During this time prisoners can take showers, complete orders or requests on the biometric system and take exercise in the exercise yards. Prisoners, in theory, also have the opportunity to attend gym sessions two or three times a week. But in the survey for HMIP only 11% of prisoners said they were able to access the gym at least twice a week. It was the view of HMIP that cross-deployment of gym staff had reduced access. There is no additional association built into the regime, but time out of cell can be increased if prisoners have work, attend education or the skills zone, medical appointments or specific programmes relating to a prisoner's sentence plan. There are no out of cell activities in the evening. At the end of the year, the regime ended at 5.30pm.

It has proved very difficult to assess how much time prisoners are spending out of their cell but in July analysis of prisoners' personal timetables based on p-NOMIS reports showed that on the day of the analysis the average time out of cell for all prisoners was four hours and 28 minutes. The minimum was one hour for those prisoners in the segregation unit, and the maximum eight hours for some on D spur (a spur for prisoners at the enhanced level). In the houseblocks 257 prisoners were out of their cells for three hours or less. As reported by HMIP, time out of cell at weekends is considerably reduced – less than two hours each day. Prisoners have shared with the IMB their frustration at the small amount of time that they are out of their cells. The HMIP recommendation that prisoners should have a minimum of 10 hours out of cell has not been achieved.

From the time that Covid measures were lifted, the major brake on increased time out of cell has been the increasingly difficult staffing situation. Though the in-post figure for prison officers has throughout the year been 136, in most months the number of unavailable staff has ranged from 16 to 40. There have been serious

shortages in offender management staff both in the prison and in the probation service. Sixty-eight percent of staff have less than two years' experience. Recruitment is not keeping up with attrition. Prisoners' time out of cell and opportunities for activities that will support rehabilitation will not improve without, as a minimum, the prison being able to deploy all staff in post. Over time the availability of weekend and evening association and time out of cell during weekdays has been eroded, in earlier years by staffing difficulties, then Covid measures and again in 2022 by staffing difficulties. There is a danger that these arrangements become embedded and normalised, to the detriment of prisoners and their rehabilitation.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

Oxleas interventions provide one-to-one and group work support for those with substance misuse issues and onward referral to community agencies for continued support on release. Within five days of referral the service aims to allocate a recovery worker to work with the prisoner to develop a recovery plan. The caseload, during the year, has ranged from 205 clients to 284 in the prison and two to nine clients in the community. Between 55 and 124 prisoners each month participate in behaviour change programmes. There were nine peer mentors, in October, who provide support to prisoners.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

HMP/YOI Isis offers 192 spaces in education for more than 600 prisoners, and they contract Novus to deliver the education and training programmes. The prisoners have the opportunity to complete entry level, level 1 or level 2 mathematics and English and some prisoners are able to take on the City & Guilds functional skills qualification. The expectation for learners undertaking mathematics and English courses is that they complete the equivalent of ten guided learning hours (GLH) per week. This generally equates to a 2.5-hour tutor session in a classroom setting and the completion of in-cell packs for the remaining 7.5 hours. Prisoners have the option to choose not to attend their tutorials and complete all the work in their cell. Teacher timetables allowing, there is also the option for prisoners to have additional tutor engagement through phone calls, wing visits, or peer orderlies. Whilst there is a focus on gaining qualifications in functional skills, HMIP assessed that there were insufficient opportunities to progress to higher level programmes.

The prisoners who take the aforementioned courses in the academy have a thirty-minute slot when they can access the library facilities every week. For most of the year prisoners could access board games, for example chess or scrabble, in the library but since December 2022, this has stopped. This is a decision that the IMB has asked be reviewed with library staff.

During the Covid lockdown the delivery of education changed, with it being delivered through graded in-cell learning packs and in small class lessons. The prison has also decided to maintain small class sizes of a dozen or less. This model continued post-pandemic when restrictions were relaxed, in part because it was considered to be a method that reduces opportunities for violence. This new educational model has increased the caseload for teachers from 24 to 27 students, with the latter figure

being the estimated limit for quality and personalised tuition. The ability to free up teacher time to ensure quality of tutorials and availability of additional wing visits is contingent on restricting teacher caseload. There is not sufficient evidence yet to determine whether this model increases prisoners' success, when compared to a traditional approach, though when comparing pre-Covid completions with completions to July there appears to be some improvement in average time to completion.

To date in the academic year of 2022/23, 45% of the learners enrolled in English level 1 and level 2 courses have achieved their qualification, while 3% have not. The remainder of those enrolled are either live learners or are waiting for their result. For those enrolled in entry level English courses, 68% of those enrolled have achieved their qualification, with the remainder either being live learners or still waiting for a result. Achievement in mathematics shows a similar picture, with 56% of level 1 and level 2 learners achieving the qualification, and only 3% of learners not achieving a qualification, with the remainder either being live learners or waiting for their result. Of those enrolled in entry level mathematics courses, 83% of prisoners have achieved their qualification, with the remainder being live learners. This academic year there have been 32 prisoners enrolled on a distance learning course. Ten of these prisoners are enrolled with the Open University whilst 12 are enrolled at Goldsmiths University, completing a 'learning together' course in partnership with the Prisoners' Education Trust (PET). Five prisoners have completed distance learning courses this academic year, with one prisoner achieving a BA (Hons) in project management.

Approximately two thirds of the prisoners at HMP/YOI Isis have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), but the amount may be higher as, although all prisoners are screened by specialist LDD-focused staff to check for a learning difficulty, prisoners have the right to not disclose information to the education team regarding any learning difficulty that they may possess. Twenty-one percent of prisoners have social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), which is the most prevalent learning difficulty at HMP/YOI Isis, followed by speech, language and communication needs, which forms 11% of the learners with LDD. Tutors are made aware of the learning difficulties any prisoner may have and the tutors are expected to adapt their approach to satisfy the needs of learners with LDD.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

The provision of training and other purposeful activities returned slowly from the winter 2021-22 Covid lockdown in February 2022

The HMIP unannounced inspection including an Ofsted inspection highlighted areas of concern that the IMB have been reporting throughout this year. The HMIP report judges the provision of purposeful activity at Isis to be poor. Time spent out of cells is limited due to the cohorting of prisoners. As few as 18% of prisoners may be involved in purposeful activity out of cells during a morning or afternoon session. Too often this limited time out of cell results in underutilised facilities and a lack of visibility and promotion of vocational skills as being an integral part of prisoners'

rehabilitation and life at Isis. This, in turn, results in undersubscribed courses, low levels of qualifications available and a lack of focus on outcomes achieved. HMIP assessed that prisoners were not getting enough time in workshops to complete programmes and develop the full range of skills.

The IMB at Isis concurs with the findings of the Ofsted team with regard to the provision of vocational training and work and believes that the provision for prisoners is poor due to underutilisation and a lack of focus on the teaching of skills that are in demand in UK businesses. Progress and developments have been slow and lack a sense of urgency or commitment to the rehabilitative purpose of vocational skills training. Better use of data needs to be made to improve focus on teaching with good outcomes and that results in employment upon release.

The HMIP inspection survey results gave the following insights into the vocational and skills training at Isis:

- 37% of prisoners felt that vocational skills were difficult to get on to at the prison;
- 69% of prisoners believed that it was difficult to get a prison job here;
- 59% of prisoners felt that staff did not encourage them to attend education, training or work.

There have been 31 complaints submitted by prisoners this year with regard to work and 14 regarding education.

Attendance, uptake and success on all courses varies. Recycling and waste management are particularly hard to recruit to, despite these having very good employment prospects. This appears to be a consequence of the younger population at Isis. The kitchens have also struggled to recruit fully to the orderly positions throughout the year.

Information regarding the levels of success, attainment and completion in courses is hard to secure and therefore comparisons on the data for the previous years and thus evidence of improvements is impossible to give here. The scarcity of data also prevents any qualitative assessment on whether the outcomes generated by the provision may constitute an excellent, good or poor service.

The plan to increase the provision of barbering by providing small salons on the houseblocks, which were mooted in last year's and the 2020 report, have still not yet come to fruition. This plan will allow the achievement of the level 3 barbering qualification.

The range of work opportunities available to prisoners includes houseblock orderlies, orderlies for visits, induction and reception, serveries, library, chapel, horticulture,

education, skills and gym, Listeners, wing representatives and a range of representative and mentor roles.

Novus provided 18 skills courses as of November 2022, with 468 learners enrolled. Actual success rates vary from 50% to 100%

HMPPS provision covers prison-necessary industries and employment.

WAMITAB qualifications have a consistently high pass rate for prisoners.

Third party or voluntary sector courses include music production, football coaching, theatre and media production, employability and a community kitchen. There is no data available on the levels of employment in these areas for prisoners upon release.

The charity Bounceback continues to work with the prison to support rehabilitation and preparation for the world of work.

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

The offender management unit (OMU) has been understaffed all year and Band 4 prison offender managers (POMs) are often cross-deployed, which then impacts the offender management work that they can complete. In particular uniformed staff on the spurs have been unable to carry out key work, with the POMs picking up some of this work.

This means that some services were not being provided at the expected level. This was mentioned in the recent HMIP inspection report, in particular the difficulties some prisoners had in progressing through their sentence plans. The situation is exacerbated by a high churn of prisoners on short sentences, mainly because of the length of time many prisoners are held on remand in other prisons before sentencing. Some, when they arrive at Isis, have only a few weeks left to serve, which means that it is difficult for them to undertake significant training, education or pre-release planning.

There is a backlog of OASys reports, estimated to be about 80 at the end of 2022. This is because many prisoners arrive at Isis without one, although the responsibility and resourcing lies with the sending prison. There is also a backlog in recategorising prisoners, around 100 at the end of 2022. During the year many prisoners categorised as category D were not transferred to open prisons because of limited transport and limited places. This situation eased towards the end of the year.

In 2022, 27% of applications to the IMB related to sentence management, a similar proportion to the year before. The main concerns were inability to contact their OMU worker about home detention curfew (HDC) or recategorisation.

The Thinking Skills Programme is the only accredited programme running to reduce reoffending. There are no accredited interventions that address, for instance, domestic abuse (BBR) or violence (Kaizen). As a result of this, POMs have been putting Thinking Skills on sentence plans due to a lack of other options, which means



that when the data is processed regarding sentence plans, it appears there is no need for BBR or Kaizen. However, the new senior probation officers who arrived during the autumn are encouraging POMs to complete sentence plans that properly address the risk and the need for these interventions. Prisoners should be moved if Isis cannot deliver these, but as there are very few transfers between prisons taking place, it is to be hoped that HMP Isis will in future have better information as a basis for allocating additional resources to BBR and Kaizen.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

In 2022, social visits were reinstated; these were organised by spur. The visits hall is welcoming, with a refreshment kiosk staffed by Pact, but unfortunately the play area did not reopen in 2022. The prison provides cubicles on the houseblocks for social video calls and prisoners have continued to have access to these throughout the year.

Four family days were organised by Pact. These are informal relaxed events, with officers in their own clothes and food provided. At Christmas family days, Santa Claus attended.

Storybook Dads restarted in 2022.

#### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

There were 527 men released in 2022 – fewer than the 609 in 2021. Up to 40% of prisoners are assessed as high risk. Planning for their release is managed by community-based probation staff. Release planning and management for other prisoners is the responsibility of prison officers and prison-based probation staff.

There are a number of initiatives and courses in the prison to prepare prisoners for release and some organisations providing direct services. Since June 2021 housing referrals have been to St. Mungo's, which has a caseworker in Isis. St. Mungo's works with prisoners supervised by London Probation. In 2022 144 prisoners were referred to its service, of whom 77 percent were resettled on release. But HMIP assessed that, though outcomes had begun to improve, there was no reliable data collection to evidence the proportion of all prisoners being released to sustainable housing.

However, because of the disparate nature of the array of services on and after release, there is a lack of available statistics on the situation of prisoners released from Isis. As mentioned last year the lack of a mechanism for tracking the short- and longer-term outcomes for those released from Isis means that it is very difficult to measure the success of the initiatives within the prison to help prisoners with accommodation, employment and wellbeing after release.

Plans were underway during the year to reintroduce release on temporary licence (ROTL). By the end of the year, however, these had not been realised and it is to be hoped that this is a priority for 2023.

## The work of the IMB

Board members visit the prison on a weekly basis to respond to applications from prisoners and visit key areas of the prison that then informs the weekly rota report. Daily reports from the prison, including reports from the segregation unit and weekly calls with the Governor, help keep the Board up to date. Applications have been responded to by meeting the prisoner or replying in writing, when necessary.

The January Board meeting was held remotely, but in February the Board returned to meeting in person in the prison. The Governor attends the Board meetings where she briefs members on current issues and responds to questions from members.

One experienced member left during 2022. Two new members were appointed. One member commenced a sabbatical.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	262
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line	48
Total number of segregation reviews attended	9

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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	10	5
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives, sanctions	8	6
C	Equality	3	
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	3
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	7	6
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	7	4
F	Food and kitchens	4	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	7	7
H1	Property within this establishment	26	16
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	27	28
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	8	1
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	53	46
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	30	30
K	Transfers	6	7
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	11	8
	Total number of applications	213	168



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