



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP High Down

**For reporting year
1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022**

Published June 2023



Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	4
3. Executive summary	5
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	8
5. Fair and humane treatment	13
6. Health and wellbeing	19
7. Progression and resettlement	23
 The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	27
Applications to the IMB	27

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 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

High Down began 2022 as a category B local prison, but in April 2022 it was finally recategorised as a category C training and resettlement prison with an operating capacity of 1,113. Many men continue to live in cramped conditions, with 400 single cells used for double occupancy, with in-cell toilets with little or no privacy.

High Down still needs to increase the number of activity spaces to successfully function as a category C prison. The building of a new workshop, which will provide an additional 90 activity spaces, is due to be completed by April 2023.

Services were provided and managed by the following partners:

Service provider	Services
Central North West London NHS Trust (CNWL)	Healthcare: Inpatients and outpatients, medical care for residential areas, pharmacy and dental care
CNWL – In-reach	Mental healthcare
Medco, then replaced by Doctor PA (from July 2022)	GP
The Forward Trust	Substance misuse
Surrey County Council	Social care
Novus	Education and training
Gov Facility Services Ltd. (GFSL)	Maintenance and repair



3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

High Down has seen much change this year, with the recategorisation to a category C training and resettlement prison in April 2022. Regime changes have been gradual, with freeflow of prisoners to education, the resettlement centre and visits beginning in May, a new uptime/downtime model for learning, skills and employment beginning in June and a new profile and adjusted regime introduced in October. By the latter part of the year the Board is pleased to report that these changes are beginning to have an impact on the quality of life for the men in High Down.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

We are pleased to note the reduction in the number of recorded self-harm incidents and assaults in 2022. We would also commend the prison for its planning around minimising the risks to both staff and prisoners as the men began to be able to mix in greater numbers and move around the prison on freeflow (see sections 4.2 and 4.3).

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

We are pleased to note that time out of cell has improved this year, and we particularly welcome the introduction of evening association (see section 6.5).

We are also pleased that a prisoner council has been introduced, with elected representatives from each house block (see section 5.3). This is in addition to the community information orderlies, who provide a further voice for prisoners.

Issues with missing and lost property continue to cause unnecessary anxiety and distress (see section 5.8).

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

We have been concerned about the number of mentally unwell men being held in the care, separation and reintegration unit, particularly those who are on constant watch (see section 5.2).

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The lack of courses to address offending behaviour remains of concern, particularly for those men convicted of sexual offences (see section 7.3).

The Board continues to be concerned about the lack of high-quality employment and training available to men in High Down, because this would better prepare them for release. In addition, there are high numbers of men in only part-time or half-time work which does little to prepare them for life on the outside (see section 7.2).

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

We welcome the introduction of a community living unit at High Down, but this does not provide a solution for those men serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPPs), who are left with little hope of ever being released and being given the additional support that they may need to successfully reintegrate into society. When is the minister going to address the problem of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for public protection? (see section 7.3.)

What steps does the minister intend to take to ensure that prisoners who require transfer to an outside secure mental health unit are assessed and transferred without delay? (see section 5.2.)

Without accommodation on release it is difficult for people to find a job, support themselves and make a fresh start, avoiding a return to prison. What steps does the minister intend to take to ensure that everyone leaving custody has somewhere to live immediately on release? (see section 7.5.)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

What steps can the Prison Service take to tackle the issue of loss of property for men being transferred to or from High Down? (see section 5.8.)

What steps can the Prison Service take to ensure that issues with the supply of canteen and refunds are resolved in a timely manner? (see section 5.7.)

TO THE GOVERNOR

What can the prison do to ensure that there is high-quality employment and training available to men in High Down, with links to employment on release? It is of concern that there are high numbers of men in only part-time or half-time work which does little to prepare them for life on the outside (see section 7.2).

What action is the prison taking to tackle the disproportionate way that the incentives scheme is applied, which has a particularly discriminatory impact on black prisoners? (see section 5.6.)

What can the prison do to ensure that key work is delivered effectively and regularly to ensure that it supports the men during their sentence? (see section 5.3.)

Can the prison develop a more efficient process for handling prisoners' property, particularly in relation to cell clearances for moves between house blocks? (see section 5.8)

3.4 Progress since the last report

In last year's report we reported that we were pleased that work had begun on the long-overdue shower refurbishment and that some showers had been fully

refurbished, with the remainder to be completed in 2022. We are therefore dismayed to report this year that the works were not completed, and some showers remain in an unsanitary and unsuitable state. As one prisoner said to us, *'I wouldn't clean my dog in there'* (see section 5.1).

We also reported that works had begun to remove the window grilles, which was also due to be completed during 2022. This work also remains incomplete.

We are concerned to note that (as reported in 2021) kitchen equipment continues to often be out of use and awaiting repair. This has an effect on the levels of stress for those working in the kitchens and results in a more limited choice of food for prisoners (see section 5.1).

There has been progress in relation to discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) and improvements in communication to prisoners are welcomed. The diversity and inclusion staff have worked hard to increase awareness of the DIRF process. From our conversations with prisoners, it would appear more people know about it, and more people have made use of it (see section 5.4).

We are also pleased to note that induction would appear to be working better than in previous years (see section 4.1).

The successful introduction of an incentivised substance free living (ISFL) unit and a community living unit (for lifers/IPP prisoners) is very welcome, as such specialist units provide important additional support for the men at High Down. Both units have proved popular, and we have received a great deal of positive feedback from prisoners and staff (see sections 6.6 and 7.3).

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The safety team at High Down monitors the safeguarding of prisoners through weekly safety intervention meetings (SIM) and monthly safety and violence reduction meetings. These multidisciplinary meetings are well attended and from our observations promote in-depth discussions focused on current areas of concern and provide oversight about individual prisoners of concern.

4.1 Reception and induction

The function of reception has changed since recategorisation, as High Down no longer receives men directly from the courts. A total of 1,646 men were processed through reception during 2022, compared with 1,938 the previous year.

Reception is staffed until 6pm on weekdays. Arrivals begin around 2pm, but if this is delayed and reception staff go off shift before all the men can be processed, staff are cross-deployed from other parts of the prison, which can detrimentally impact the evening regime.

Prisoners are taken from reception to the induction wing, where they remain for between three and seven days and complete their induction. Prisoners with specific vulnerabilities go directly to the vulnerable prisoner (VP) house block or the detoxification unit. Room ready representatives prepare the cells for new arrivals. From our discussions with prisoners, it appears the overwhelming majority do receive induction within the first few days of arrival, which has not always been the case in the past.

Cell and decency packs prepared for the arrival of new prisoners



4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Death in custody

The Board expresses condolences for the one death in custody during 2022, (inquest findings yet to be published) and the death of an individual shortly after release.

Self-harm incidents

There were fewer incidents of self-harm this year (721 in 2022 compared to 800 in 2021).

Prisoners who have been recalled to prison remain over-represented compared to the rest of the population at High Down.

Prisoners who self-harm or are at risk of harming themselves are supported through the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) system and are discussed at the SIM. The Board is encouraged that the safety team is focussing on strategies to reduce self-harm, including work on the debt action plan, and working closely with mental health professionals to develop pathways for mentally unwell prisoners.

Assessment, care in custody and teamwork

In 2022, 456 ACCTs were opened, compared to 686 in 2021 and 795 in 2020.

It was noted in our 2021 annual report that there was a reduction in new ACCTs following the rollout of ACCT v6, and this trend has continued. The Board remains concerned that the document complexity and quality assurance procedures are seen as a deterrent to opening an ACCT and would welcome feedback from management as to the likely reasons for this reduction.

At the weekly safety assurance meeting, examples of good practice are highlighted and shared amongst staff, areas for development are identified, and training provided to staff. The number of late or non-multidisciplinary ACCT reviews is reducing.

Board members attend some ACCT reviews and were generally pleased with the quality of the conversations and pathways discussed. Where the prisoner refuses to engage, this is noted for follow-up. Reviews of written ACCT reviews show some good quality records and care plans, with areas for development picked up in quality assurance audits. However, we are concerned that there have been instances where checks on prisoners have not always been carried out or documented, particularly by night staff. The Board is aware of one case where an ACCT document had been completed as if night observations had been done, when from CCTV footage it was clear they had not. This failing was addressed by a governor.

Welfare checks

All prisoners should receive a weekly welfare check. The average number of weekly checks during the year was around 880, with dips earlier in the year to below 600. Towards the end of the year the average was closer to 1,000. The population is around 1,090, implying not all prisoners are checked weekly. The importance of these checks has been reiterated to staff.

Listeners and Samaritans

There were a total of 15,652 calls to the Samaritans in 2022, which is a decrease compared to the 18,160 calls in 2021. Nationally there was an increase in calls during lockdown, so this reduction may reflect the relaxation of restrictions. Prisoners have reported instances of their cell phones not always working, although there is no evidence to suggest the two are connected. Requests to speak with a Listener averaged around 40 per month. There were 19 trained Listeners in the establishment at the end of the year, a ratio of around one Listener to every 60 prisoners. The aim is 1:50. Listeners' requests to be able to follow up with prisoners after a particularly difficult call have been facilitated.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Violent incidents

Reported assaults	2022	2021	2020
Total prisoner-on-prisoner assaults	157	182	269
Serious assaults on prisoners	29	37	Not available
Total prisoner-on-staff assaults	85	97	133
Serious assaults on staff	21	22	11

The total number of assaults continues to decrease. All are dealt with through the adjudication system or referred to the police. During lockdown, High Down received many prisoners with gang or postcode issues, and a comprehensive database was developed to capture and share this information prior to the lifting of lockdown restrictions. It is commendable that with the lifting of restrictions, and when freeflow restarted mid-year, there was only a marginal increase in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, from an average of 12 per month in January to April, to 13 per month in May to December, despite anecdotal evidence that prisoners and staff had been very concerned about an increase in gang violence as mixing increased.

Challenge, support and intervention plans

Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) seek to challenge violent behaviours and support change and rehabilitation. Since High Down became a category C prison, there has been a drive to increase referrals by staff and safety/violence reduction representatives. The referral criteria have been extended in line with category C protocol. At the beginning of the year there were three prisoners on CSIPs, increasing to 21 by the end of the year. All CSIP prisoners are discussed at the SIM and case-managed by a custodial manager.

Extra security arrangements are put in place for prisoners on CSIPs and gang affiliated CSIPs. All CSIP prisoners must be escorted around the establishment and are identifiable to staff when in the visits' hall.

Self-isolators/prisoners on separate regime

Prisoners are classified as 'self-isolators' where they feel under threat from non-associates and often have gang, debt and/or mental health issues. They are managed under the SIM and allocated a welfare case manager. Other vulnerable

prisoners, including transgender people and men convicted of sexual offences, are managed under separate regimes where no space is available on the vulnerable prisoners' house block. There have been occasions when vulnerable prisoners have been housed on other house blocks due to lack of space, which then results in the prison having to operate separate regimes. This is challenging for the residential staff and often results in time out of cells for prisoners being reduced.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force	2022	2021	2020
Unplanned	358	505	659
Planned	167	87	143
Total	525	592	802

Regime issues/refusal to return to cell, relocations and assaults are the main reasons leading to restraint by use of force.

The total number of recorded unplanned use of force incidents has fallen, whereas the number of planned restraints increased substantially following relaxation of Covid restrictions, and in part we understand that this was because of prisoner safety concerns about relocations.

Control and restraint is the primary method of restraint with and without cuffs. Batons were drawn and used once in 2022, which marks a positive reduction from being drawn eight times and used twice in 2021. PAVA was drawn and not used once in each year.

Towards the end of the year there was a national mandate to increase the number of staff trained in the use of PAVA – the target is 50% of operational staff by the end of March 2023.

CCTV and body worn video camera (BWVC) footage of incidents are reviewed weekly – examples of good practice are highlighted, along with areas in need of improvement, particularly de-escalation skills and timely completion of paperwork. The Board is pleased to note the increased involvement of senior management in these reviews, as it would appear to us that the meetings now have more impact.

Debrief interviews are offered to each prisoner after an incident involving use of force. Out of 205 prisoner debrief interviews, 77 prisoners stated staff acted reasonably and 74 stated they acted unreasonably.

There were problems with BWVCs earlier in the year and reluctance to either wear them or turn them on. New BWVCs were rolled out mid-year and use became mandatory later in the year. There have been ongoing problems with CCTV cameras around the establishment, with some areas having limited coverage.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The availability of illicit items, including drugs, alcohol, mobile phones and, to a lesser extent, improvised weapons, continues to be a major concern. We are

advised that in the early part of the year the significant entry route for drugs, mobile phones and weapons was via the post, including fake rule 39 legal letters (privileged correspondence from legal representatives) and parcels disguised as inter-prison transfer parcels.

Methods to disrupt the flow of illicit items into the establishment have included disallowing the sending in of underwear, photocopying all incoming mail and implementing an authorisation code system for rule 39 letters.

We are told that, during the course of the year, the main methods of entry shifted to passes in visits, drones and throwovers. It is also thought that as the availability of drugs has been reduced, the amount of hooch being brewed has increased.

Illicit items may also be brought in when prisoners transfer in from other establishments or return from outside hospital. A total of 1,848 x-ray body scans were conducted during the year, resulting in 236 finds of illicit items. Prisoners who indicate positive are encouraged to give up the item themselves, or they are located in the care, separation and reintegration unit (CSRU) until the item is passed.

All staff and volunteers pass through the metal detector and are subject to searches. The 'no paper' policy introduced in 2021 was abandoned during 2022, as it was thought to have had a negligible impact on the flow of illicit items. People visiting prisoners are checked by the passive drugs dogs and the visit hall is monitored by CCTV. During the year, 14 suspected attempts by visitors to pass items to prisoners have been intercepted, compared to only two in 2021.

Prison-wide mandatory drug testing (MDT) has not restarted following the relaxation of restrictions, except on the newly created incentivised substance free living unit. Instances of prisoners being under the influence of NPS/cannabis or hooch are recorded almost daily in the daily briefing and prisoners tell us that illicit substances are relatively easy to get hold of.

'can easily get hold of drugs if you want them'
'people take them and then can't pay up and owe big'
'everyone knows drugs are getting in...through staff'

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Showers

Last year we reported that showers on the older house blocks were in a poor state of repair, with little regard for personal decency. The new showers which were installed on the majority of house blocks were a substantial improvement and much appreciated by the men. Unfortunately, not all the showers on two house blocks have been refurbished and, although we understood that the work would be carried out in 2022, this has not happened. We are told this is due to lack of funds and that there is still no date when it will be done.

'wouldn't clean my dog in there'
'sometimes the smell is really bad and you feel like you could fall it's so slimy'

The provision of working washing machines and dryers on the newer house blocks has been problematic, as the original machines were inappropriately installed when the house blocks were built. We have been told that the machines were fitted on wet concrete and are therefore difficult to move. This issue was apparently not appreciated until the new machines arrived towards the end of the year. They have still not been installed, and there is still no date for this to be done.

We remain concerned that one lift on house block 6 is sometimes out of order for several weeks, impacting on some prisoners' ability to access certain activities.

Kitchens and food

As we reported in 2021, kitchen equipment is often out of use and awaiting repair. At the end of 2022 two of the four Bratt pans, two of four boilers and two of the eight ovens were out of order. Staff say this has an effect on the levels of stress for those working in the kitchens and results in a more limited choice of food for prisoners.

Men report that they enjoy working in the kitchens and it remains a popular job. Prisoners comment that the food in High Down is generally better than in other prisons, although the breakfast packs remain very small for adults.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

When High Down became a category C prison, the segregation unit was renamed the care, separation and reintegration unit (CSRU). The CSRU is a small unit with only 22 cells and a higher ratio of staff to prisoners than the other house blocks. Men tell us that they receive a lot of support from staff there.

'I feel safer in here...and the staff are good too, they really seem to know you'
'you get into debt and there's nowhere else to go'

Prisoners in the CSRU have access to over two hours of daily regime, which includes one hour spent on the yard. Men can now exercise in pairs and the yards have been refurbished, and equipment provided.

Length of time spent in the CSRU

During the year, 30 prisoners were held in segregation for over 42 days. The longest of these was 207 days. It is still the case that many prisoners are held in the CSRU for long periods of time because of their refusal to return to normal location.

Fit for segregated conditions?

When a decision is made to segregate someone, medically trained staff must carry out an assessment of whether the person is physically and mentally fit to be held in segregation conditions. They must complete an algorithm which sets out their reasoning and the decision reached.

Prior to the closure of the healthcare inpatient unit, prisoners who failed the algorithm were transferred to the inpatient unit. As that unit is no longer available, prisoners are now being segregated, despite having failed the segregation algorithm.

When a prisoner fails the algorithm, they can only be held in segregation conditions if it is approved by a governor. This has happened on a number of occasions and is considered a defensible decision, as it is argued that there is nowhere else in High Down where the prisoner could be safely housed. We are concerned about the number of men who have failed the algorithm, particularly towards the end of the year, as it would suggest that there are more mentally ill men being held in an inappropriate environment.

Prisoners who failed the medical algorithm (2022)	
January-March	8 (all held in healthcare)
April-June	3 (all held in healthcare)
July-September	3 (all held in healthcare)
October-December	13 (all remained in the CSRU)

Staff have reported to us that they find it hard to manage more unwell men in the CSRU. Some men have been held in the CSRU until space in an outside secure hospital has become available, and there has been an increase in the number of men being held in the unit whilst on an open ACCT.

In November 2022 the Board wrote to the prison group director (PGD) to express our serious concerns regarding the holding of men with what appeared to be serious mental health issues within the CSRU. At that time two men were being held in the CSRU on constant watch. This was unsuitable. In our view it was potentially dangerous for the men to be held in such conditions, and it was disruptive and upsetting for the other men held in the CSRU. It was also unfair and distressing for staff that had to try to manage the men in unsafe conditions. We commend the staff for their efforts in keeping the men safe.

In reply, the PGD stated that discussions were ongoing with healthcare providers to find a pathway to transfer acutely unwell prisoners going through gateway assessments to an inpatients unit whilst they are waiting for a secure hospital bed.

He recognised that the London local prisons were at capacity with current cases of mentally unwell men on their healthcare units, as well as others on normal location who are awaiting admission, and this means that the men currently managed in High Down are not able to seamlessly transfer to a healthcare unit in a London prison.

He confirmed that there was a proposal for the installation of photochromatic doors on house blocks and in the CSRU to enable appropriate constant watch support if required both in the CSRU and on ordinary location. The doors have yet to be installed and by the end of the year there were still mentally unwell men being held in the CSRU, and this remains of significant concern to the Board.

We commend the efforts of the mental health in-reach (MHIR) team, which is working closely with the CSRU to offer more support to the men whilst a better solution is found.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

Complaints against staff

Prisoners can submit a complaint using the prison system or they can write to the IMB if they have concerns about staff. In 2022 the number of applications we received in this category was 92, slightly lower than 95 in 2021.

In our 2022 survey of 38 men, 14 said that staff-prisoner relationships are good, 20 said they were not good and four preferred not to answer.

'Staff hide away, act like they're busy'
'it's variable, the good ones are fantastic and always get back to you'
'why don't they just talk to you, it's always us who have to start the conversation'
'I like the ones who treat you like real people'
'some new staff are "con shy"'

Communication

In our survey of 38 men, only 12 said they felt communication was good, and 25 felt it was not good. We are pleased to report that a prisoner council has been established, with prisoners being elected as representatives for each house block.

'it's like the dark ages, you hear the wrong things like rumours and you don't know who to believe'
'mostly get stuff off the kiosk but some people can't read'
'it's ok if you know who to ask, some staff go to find out for you and even come back to let you know. Others don't'
'be good to have any news at the same time every day, maybe when you get your food. Then you know what to expect'

Key work

Key work was suspended during the pandemic and restarted in February 2022. Key workers should provide prisoners with weekly support and help them work on their personal development. They should also promote positive relationships and encourage engagement with families and others in the community.

Each key worker is allocated a caseload of six men. In High Down at the end of 2022 there were 169 key workers. The table below shows how the number of sessions varied greatly throughout the year and it is clear that there are not enough sessions taking place to ensure every prisoner is even having one per month.

	Completed key work sessions per month
February	89
March	239
April	141
May	347
June	117
July	49
August	139
September	254
October	534
November	1,163
December	695

The men's experiences with their key worker also varied. In our survey of 38 men, five told us that they had regular sessions and found them very helpful. Ten men said they did not know who their key worker was. The rest told us they had only seen their key worker once or twice and were not sure exactly what their role was.

'really great, she is good to talk to and from what I hear I got lucky'
'he really seems to care and comes to see me quite a bit'
'don't know if I have one, never seen anyone'
'tried to get hold of him on the kiosk but never got a reply'
'I think I have one, someone came to see me a long time ago but didn't come back'

5.4 Equality and diversity

Discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF)

The diversity and inclusion department received 109 DIRFs during 2022, a substantial increase compared with 56 the previous year. Of the 109 received during the year, 31 were sent for further investigation and nine were upheld.

The initial screening determines whether the complaint is forwarded for investigation, sent on as a Comp1 or returned to the prisoner with no further action required. A reply is sent to the prisoner to explain the result of the screening. If it is sent on for investigation, the prisoner is told who the investigating officer is. A new guide has been written for investigating officers.

The improvements in communication to prisoners are welcomed and have been implemented in response to recommendations made by the Zahid Mubarek Trust (ZMT). The diversity and inclusion staff have worked hard to increase awareness of the DIRF process. From conversations with prisoners, it would appear that more people know about it, and more people have made use of it (see also section 5.6 below).

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

As restrictions have been eased throughout this year, the chaplaincy team has gradually restored regular worship for the different faith groups. The multifaith team of chaplains provides a visible and approachable presence throughout the prison and is available in reception for prisoners being released.

The chaplaincy has restarted the Sycamore Tree course, which is taught in prisons to give prisoners the opportunity to explore the effects of crime on victims.

5.6 Incentives schemes

An incentives scheme is in place to address negative behaviour and reward positive behaviour. Prisoners may move between the three levels of bronze, silver and gold, dependent on their behaviour, with certain privileges available for silver and gold. Staff are expected to record these behaviours, and to let the prisoner know when they add entries to their personal record on NOMIS.

Black prisoners continue to be disproportionately more likely to be on the bronze level of the incentives scheme, and work is currently being done to explore why this should be the case.

Black prisoners make up 32% of the total population yet accounted for less than 16% of the total number of men who received positive behaviour entries. Over the course of 2022, positive entries for black prisoners decreased by 12% and negatives increased by 12%.

Towards the end of the year focus groups were held with ZMT, and one topic discussed was the use of incentives. The feedback from prisoners was that staff do not tell them when they receive a negative or 'red entry'. They said they often only find out when applying for jobs or when their parole hearing is approaching. Prisoners also wished for more positive entries to be given, without them having to ask.

5.7 Complaints

The prison complaints system is in place for prisoners to raise concerns or issues which they might have with the prison, and staff have seven days to reply.

It remains of concern to the Board that missing property and canteen are always in the top five most common complaint subject matters.

Complaints	2022	2021	2020
Total complaints	3,739	3,884	2,958
Most common reason for complaint	Property lost on transfer or within High Down Canteen Offender management	Property lost on transfer or within High Down Canteen Offender management	Property lost on transfer or within High Down Finance Mail

Issues with the supply of canteen, particularly delays with issuing refunds, cause many men frustration. The cost to the prison for compensation for missing items of canteen was on average £157 every month during 2022.

Eight percent of applications we receive are complaints about the prison complaints system.

Of the 3,739 complaints made to the prison in 2022, only 37% were upheld.

5.8 Property

Lost and missing property continues to be a huge issue. Property goes missing during transfer from other prisons and also when men move cells and the cell clearance is not done properly or if the cell door is left unlocked.

Property lost within High Down cost the prison an average of £590 in compensation each month during 2022.

The IMB also receives a substantial number of applications regarding lost property.

Property applications to the IMB	2022	2021
Property missing within High Down	87	72
Property missing on transfer	115	69

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The significant change to healthcare provision at High Down in 2022 was the closure of the inpatients unit as a consequence of the recategorisation of the prison as a category C establishment. Initially, the inpatients unit was due to close at the end of July 2022, but this was delayed as there were difficulties in placing a small number of men who required long-term inpatient treatment in suitable alternative accommodation.

At the end of 2022 the situation was not entirely resolved, and so it has meant that resource in terms of officers, healthcare staff and physical space has been absorbed by this unit. The vacated space will be repurposed into a specialist personality disorder unit during 2023.

CNWL concerns and HMPPS healthcare complaints

CNWL operates a prisoner concerns system separately from the prison complaint system. Prisoners are required to complete a separate form to submit their concerns.

Concerns/complaints	2022	2021
Accessing care	96	49
Care quality	24	38
Concerns	19	8
Dentist	23	23
GP	41	43
Healthcare staff	1	12
Medication	149	94
Mental health	43	16
Miscellaneous	11	61
Single cell request	21	n/a
Total concerns	428	344

There has been an increase in the overall number of concerns submitted to healthcare in 2022, and there has been a substantial increase in the number relating to medication and accessing care. These are both issues that are often raised with us by the prisoners.

Healthcare complaints (applications) to the IMB continue to significantly outnumber all other categories of complaints, as we received 139 (13%) in 2022.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Outpatients

A comprehensive range of primary healthcare services is available within the prison. In addition to GP, dentistry and optical services, more specialised services are offered by external consultants visiting the prison.

'Officers ask you what's wrong [when you want to make an appointment] but you don't want them to know your business'
'been trying to see the physio for months, given up asking'
'didn't get told when it was so missed the appointment'

We are pleased that GP waiting times have reduced considerably since the end of 2021, when they stood at an unacceptable 12 weeks. However, we remain concerned about waiting times for other services, and difficulties in obtaining appointments are regularly raised with us by the men. All prisons have a responsibility to provide prisoners with the same standard of healthcare that they would receive in the community, but the waiting times for 2022 continue to suggest that this does not always happen.

Waiting times (weeks)	2022	2021	2020
GP	2	12	1
Dentist	12	13	18
Optician	15	7	9
Physiotherapy	9	6	7
Podiatry	15	18	9

Pharmacy services for general medical care are run by CNWL, and the Forward Trust administers drugs related to substance addiction. There were 22,279 prescriptions during the reporting year compared to 13,955 in 2021. This is a huge increase, and we are not clear why this should be the case.

6.3 Mental healthcare

The mental health in-reach (MHIR) service comprises a team of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists. Separately there is a small team of forensic psychologists.

There were 1,034 men referred for mental health services, a significant decrease from 2021, when there were 1,420. Of these, the majority were signed up for psychiatric or psychological care.

Prisoners with behavioural problems are not managed by MHIR, which can mean that their issues go unaddressed and they can therefore be disruptive, taking up a disproportionate amount of staff time.

Prisoners with serious mental health concerns can be referred for external assessment, with a view to transferring to an outside secure mental health facility. The number identified for assessment and subsequent transfer has increased compared to last year.

We are increasingly concerned about the average length of time between assessment and transfer, which now stands at 50 days. It is simply not acceptable that mentally ill men are held in prison conditions for so long when they have been

assessed as requiring specialist treatment in a secure mental health facility. It is particularly unacceptable that one man waited 241 days for transfer.

	2022	2021	2020
Identified for external assessment	32	28	44
Actual transfers	27	16	30
Average time between assessment and transfer (days)	50	21	19
Longest wait time (days)	241	60	Unknown

6.4 Social care

During 2022 an average of 21 men per month received social care. Services include cell cleaning, change of bedding and provision of specialised equipment, and also include men receiving peer support from men appointed as social care representatives.

6.5 Exercise, time out of cell

Use of gym

The prison has a large gym with plenty of exercise equipment and is detailed to have 10 physical education (PE) staff. Recruitment has been problematic for a number of years, and we are pleased to report that two members of PE staff have been trained from the existing officers in the prison.

Prisoners attend gym on a rota system, which generally works well, although prisoners report to us that they miss gym sessions due to a lack of staff. We have been told that this disproportionately impacted vulnerable prisoners from house block 6.

Core day regime

A new regime was introduced in October 2022, with the introduction of a new profile. We are pleased to report that when we speak to prisoners they generally say they are now spending more time out of cell, usually around three hours per day in downtime, in addition to time out of cell for purposeful activity and evening association, when this happens. Evening association was introduced, and is really welcomed, although it does not always happen if there are staff shortages.

We are advised that over the weekend prisoners who are not essential workers are allowed out of cell for around five hours a day, although again we know that staff shortages often result in a more limited regime.

6.6 Drug rehabilitation

The Forward Trust (FT) offers clinical and social support services to prisoners, based on an assessment of their needs.

Up to one third of prisoners are receiving clinical or social support from FT at any one time. Approximately 100 men per month received clinical support to manage and reduce their drug dependence.

An average of 240 men per month receive social support, including group work, and one-to-one and in-cell work.

Incentivised substance free living unit

The incentivised substance free living (ISFL) unit was opened in March. Men must have at least six months of their sentence left to serve and be willing to sign a compact committing to regular drug testing and accepting community support. The Board has spoken to prisoners on the unit, who were unanimously positive about it. Staff have also reported to us that they have formed really positive relationships with the men and that the atmosphere is conducive to a rehabilitative culture.

'this is the house block to be on...they treat you like an adult'
'feel safe on here'
'staff trust you'
'no drugs so you feel safer'
'took time to get on here so not going to mess it up'

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education

The Board has ongoing concerns about educational provision at High Down, particularly poor attendance rates for education classes. The overall attendance rate for 2022 was 40%. Visits and medical appointments would account for some of the reduced attendance, but a shortage of officers and tutors had a significant impact. House blocks 4, 5 and 6 are more likely to miss their education sessions, as they are in the afternoon when they are more likely to be impacted by staff shortages and visits.

We are pleased to say that the introduction of the new profile in October resulted in more officers being available, which has led to fewer education sessions being missed.

Some prisoners tell us that they are unclear as to why they are allocated to certain courses which they do not feel are appropriate to their educational background or sentence progression.

Recruitment and retention of tutors continues to be an issue.

Library

At the start of the year library staff visited the house blocks themselves in order to maintain engagement with the men, and we commend them for their efforts to maintain engagement whilst restrictions were in place.

In June, the library fully reopened to all house blocks, with evening visits starting in November. Book groups and writing groups resumed over the summer. Library staff also run Storybook Dads, which allows men to record stories for their children. As with education, officer staffing levels affect attendance for those house blocks which were allocated afternoon sessions. The introduction of freeflow and movement slips has not resolved the problem.

7.2 Vocational training, work

At the end of November, 137 prisoners were in full-time work, and 593 prisoners in part-time or half-time work. There were 322 prisoners without any work, but this figure included approximately 70 men who were ineligible for work, such as the retired or medically unfit. The Board remains concerned about the lack of high-quality employment available to men in High Down, because this would better prepare them for release.

In 2022, 93 men completed rail track qualifications, but only 12 men completed the forklift truck course due to issues with the contractor.

Work began on the new DHL warehouse during 2022. It is due for completion in spring 2023 and will create an additional 180 part-time jobs. The contractor Galliford Try (GT) has employed eight prisoners on the construction site, four of whom have been offered employment on release, and one serving prisoner will be employed to fit a new kitchen on one of the house blocks.



The prisoners who have worked on the project will be awarded certificates and given references by GT. They will also be presented with a toolkit to take with them on release. They are guaranteed to be interviewed for positions with either GT or their sub-contractors.

*'it's a bit of normality working here, doing stuff I'm qualified to do on the outside'
'been treated really well, feel like its proper work'
'wish it could go on forever'*

7.3 Offender management, progression

Many prisoners have continued to express their frustration at the lack of opportunity for sentence progression in High Down, and this remains an area of concern for the Board. Timely completion of sentence plans (OASys) is also a concern. We understand that the offender management unit (OMU) has completed over 600 OASys documents in 2022, the highest of any prison in the London area, and the Board acknowledges its efforts to complete this volume. At the end of 2022 there were 81 outstanding OASys reports.

'you get knocked back for progress for not having an up to date OASys report and so it's stupid that you even put forward for a review as they know they are going to knock you back'

Prisoners also express frustration regarding the level of communication they have with their offender managers, which can also impact on sentence progression. The Board recognises that offender manager caseloads are extremely high and that difficulties in recruiting staff and a lack of key work have exacerbated the situation. Many queries which are directed at OMU staff could have been resolved by key workers.

During the year, 207 men were released on home detention curfew (HDC), with 106 being released on their eligibility date. Issues with the Metropolitan Police carrying out checks on the suitability of accommodation prevented some men being released on time. If prisoners were transferred to High Down close to their HDC dates, this also contributed to delays.

Thinking Skills Programme

From April 2022, 29 men completed the Thinking Skills Programme. This was initially impacted by staff shortages, but completion rates improved during the year as restrictions were lifted. Priority is given to men with a release date or parole hearing within the next 12 months. In 2022 there were no available courses for prisoners convicted of sexual offences.

Indeterminate sentenced prisoners

At the end of 2022, there were 28 prisoners serving IPP sentences and 58 prisoners serving life sentences. The Board welcomes the opening of the community living unit in November, which was set up with the needs of this cohort in mind. Initiatives include cooking courses, specialised classes in education, and three dedicated officers. At the end of the year, 48 men had joined the unit and feedback has been positive.

7.4 Family contact

January 2022 saw the return of weekend social visits, facilitated house block by house block until May, when this was relaxed. Social video calls have continued, having been moved to custom-made booths in the main visits hall.

The Board was pleased with improvements to the visits hall, including wall murals painted by prisoners and two new children's play areas. The prison provides teddies which prisoners can give to their children to take home.



Refreshments are available by ordering and prepaying at the visitors' centre, with a delivery system in place in the visits hall, with the aim of ensuring that the men can spend more time with their visitors. The Board would like to acknowledge the courteous way the security team and dog handlers have conducted security searches of external visitors.

Staff working in visits have worked very hard to ensure visitors enjoy their visit and they encourage and act on feedback. The Board has also spoken to visitors, and their comments to us have been very positive.

'so much better than other jails, all the staff treat you like decent people'
'looks great for the kids, they love coming here'
'found me a quiet place to feed the baby, it felt good'
'it's good that she can play with her dad here, she loves the toys'

7.5 Resettlement planning

Men continue to be released from High Down without settled accommodation. In the six months from July to December 2022, there were 162 men released into the London area. Of those, 135 were released with some form of accommodation arranged for the day of release, meaning that 16.6% were released with no fixed abode (NFA). However, it is important to note that of the 135 that were released with accommodation, 25 only had a temporary 'sofa surfing' arrangement with friends or family.

The pre-release team provides in-cell workbooks on a variety of topics, such as drug and alcohol awareness, money management and decision making. The pre-release team can assist with acquiring citizen cards and birth certificates, as well as opening bank accounts for men approaching release.

In December, the resettlement centre was reopened for four days per week, with a new employment hub, available for prisoners with 12 weeks or less of their sentence remaining. The centre offers appointments with the OMU, prison offender managers, accommodation advisors, the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	416
Total number of segregation reviews attended	137

Applications to the IMB

Code	Category	2022					2021
		Paper	0800	Verbal	Total	% +/-	
A	Accommodation	14	13	2	29	-72%	104
B	Adjudications	13	6	1	20	18%	17
C	Equality and Diversity (inc. religion)	10	4	5	19	6%	18
D	Education/Employment/Training inc. IEP	38	8	6	52	-15%	61
E1	Family/visits inc. mail & phone	38	6	5	49	-54%	107
E2	Finance/pay	27	10	7	44	-15%	52
F	Food/Kitchen related	8	9	4	21	0%	21
G	Health related	99	22	18	139	-39%	228
H1	Property (within current establishment)	67	13	7	87	21%	72
H2	Property during transfer /in another establishment)	71	25	19	115	67%	69
H3	Canteen, facilities, Catalogue shopping, Argos	19	6	3	28	-35%	43
I	Sentence related (inc. HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-cat etc.	67	16	40	123	-21%	156
J	Staff/prisoner/detainee concerns inc. bullying	63	27	2	92	-3%	95
	Category J as % of Total apps	1.8%	0.7%	0.9%	3.4%		
K	Transfers	18	7	9	34	-31%	49
L	Miscellaneous	34	9	8	51	-15%	60
L1	Complaints System	34	20	11	65	8%	60
L2	Regime related	20	4	3	27	-46%	50
	General Applications	574	615	73	995	-21%	1262
	Confidential Applications to Chair				81	59%	51
	Category J as % of Confidential apps				38.3%		
	Total				1076	-18%	1313



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at imb@justice.gov.uk.