



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Exeter

**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; and
- 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 United Nations 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 Exeter is a category B local and resettlement prison which holds prisoners remanded or sentenced by the courts in southwest England and those resettling in the region. It is a traditional Victorian inner-city establishment built in 1853. Consequently, it remains under constant pressure due to limited capacity for expansion and deterioration of its structure and fabric. Its operational capacity at the end of the reporting year was 342. This had been gradually reduced during the year for scheduled maintenance work to be undertaken. Most prisoners share a cell, living in overcrowded conditions. The majority of cells have in-cell sanitation, with the exception of D wing, which accommodates prisoners on the enhanced level of the incentives scheme, where there is 24-hour access to communal facilities. The cell-sharing risk assessment rating at Exeter provides for some single-occupancy cells to accommodate prisoners deemed unsuitable to share with others. Other cells are twin-occupancy, but space is tight, and any suggestion of triple-occupancy would be unreasonable. Prisoners at Exeter have access to in-cell telephones.

A feature of HMP Exeter has previously been F wing, a social care unit. The unit was closed for refurbishment early in 2022 and has yet to reopen. It is expected that it will return to use once refurbished, providing accommodation for prisoners with acute health and social care needs, a palliative care suite for terminally ill prisoners and a constant watch cell. The wing has historically been a resource for the regional cluster.

In terms of the demographics of the prison, these have remained broadly similar to previous years. Averages across the reporting year show:

Population	Age
4%	18-20 – young adults
11%	21-24
21%	25-29
32%	30-39
18%	40-49
8%	50-59
5%	60 years old or more

White ethnicity comprised 83% of the population across the year, and black, Asian and minority ethnicity 17%.

As a local and resettlement prison, Exeter normally has a high turnover of prisoners. The average length of stay for sentenced prisoners (non-resettlement cohort) is between four and six weeks. Resettlement prisoners can be at Exeter anywhere between a week and 16 months if from the Exeter local delivery probation unit. Prisoners arrive at Exeter often with high levels of need and increasingly with mental health issues. The regime, opportunities and facilities offered are best suited to those on shorter sentences.

Key providers:

- Healthcare, including mental health, was provided by Practice Plus Group until December 2022 when the contract was taken over by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.
- Social care plans are delivered by Oxleas in collaboration with Devon County Council.
- The integrated substance misuse services (clinical elements) were provided by Exeter Drugs Project until November 2022, before being taken over by Change Grow Live.
- Probation services were provided by the Probation Service.
- Learning and skills activities are provided by Weston College.
- Serco provides the escort contract.
- Maintenance is provided by Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL).
- Choices Consultancy Service delivered family services until October 2022 when the contract was transferred to Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact).
- In addition, several voluntary organisations provide a range of smaller services.

HMP Exeter is part of a southwest prison cluster (which also includes HMP Channings Wood, HMP Dartmoor and HMP Guys Marsh), and a number of services and resources are shared.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the independent monitoring board(IMB) at HMP Exeter for the year 2022.

The Board's report is based on:

- direct monitoring of accommodation, facilities and services
- remote review of documentation, records and data
- external reports: Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP)
- attendance at some prison meetings
- conversations with prisoners, staff and other agencies
- monitoring of prisoners' complaints
- dealing with prisoners' applications to the IMB.

3.1.1 External inspections

HMIP conducted an unannounced full inspection between 31 October and 11 November 2022, resulting in an urgent notification (UN) to the Secretary of State for Justice. This is the second and consecutive UN. Progress towards the various actions plans, arising as a consequence of the previous inspection in 2018, has been limited.

3.1.2 Staffing

At the end of the reporting period, the staff-in-post position showed the prison to be fully staffed. However, although band 3 officers were up to complement, approximately 25% of that group were not available to detail, due to temporary promotion, detached duty, new officers in training and long-term absences. Throughout the year there continued to be a high proportion of inexperienced officers in this group (less than two years' service). The effect of a slow emergence from the Covid pandemic meant that the normal regime was still relatively new to many officers.

A lack of stability within the senior management team (SMT), raised previously by the IMB, including in the 2021 annual report, and also by HMIP in 2021 and 2022, has unfortunately persisted. Where the prison has been able to offer more attractive terms, attrition has slowed and improvements noted, for example following the appointment of a new head of safety. In other areas, where staffing structure changes were not supported, progress has slowed and disrupted the ability of the prison to take forward improvements in a timely, consistent and sustained manner. The Board continues to have grave concerns about the perpetual instability that plagues the SMT.

3.1.3 Violence and self-harm

Both violence and self-harm decreased over the course of the reporting period, though violence was only slightly lower than in the previous year(see section4.3). The recent UN in respect of HMP Exeter raised both of these as priority or key concerns.

3.1.4 Healthcare

The restricted regime at the beginning of 2022, due to Covid outbreaks in the prison, led to a continuation of the adverse effects outlined in the annual report from 2021 on the health and wellbeing of prisoners. The uncertainty surrounding the new healthcare contracts has led to an already stretched resource being further challenged. Details of this and its impact are discussed in section 6. It is evident that staff work hard to address the physical and mental health problems of their patients and have improved the concerns and complaints procedures when patients have been unhappy with their care.

3.1.5 Prison maintenance

Scheduled maintenance to residential accommodation has meant that for much of the reporting year the prison has operated with a reduced capacity and with contractors onsite. Work to the temporary prisoners' visits hall, legal visits and the clothing exchange store was ongoing throughout the reporting period. B and F wings remained closed during the year. The impact of this has been to disrupt the processes, systems and routine of the prison.

The IT infrastructure remained problematic through much of 2022, but a new Ministry of Justice system was introduced in the autumn, which has proved to be faster and much more reliable than the system it replaced. At an operational level, the prison CCTV system remains unreliable, and when it fails, repairs are slow and costly, with obvious safety and security implications for the prison.

3.1.6 Education, library and vocational skills

The education provision has not recovered from the disruptions of the pandemic as quickly as anticipated. This was largely due to staffing issues, which have meant that there were insufficient staff to ensure a safe regime while enabling education classes to take place (see section 7.1). The situation improved towards the end of the year. Additionally, Weston College management changed over the year, following temporary staffing for some months. These changes are allowing plans to develop for improving the curriculum.

3.2 Main judgements

3.2.1 How safe is the prison?

HMP Exeter continues to experience high levels of violence and self-harm. Despite a vision and some strategies to ensure and improve the safety of prisoners, there are still vulnerabilities at both the managerial and operational levels. These can have an adverse impact on outcomes for prisoners. The Board continues to have some concerns about the challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) processes which are designed to keep prisoners safe. The number of prisoners with mental health issues and a significant number of prisoners with a history of self-harm have played a part in adversely affecting efforts to improve safety. While there is clear evidence that the prison is committed to reducing violence and self-harm and interrupting the supply of illicit items, which are associated with debt, bullying and violence, there is still scope for improvement.

3.2.2 How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The slow exit from Covid restrictions, staff shortages, extensive and continuing refurbishment and overcrowded conditions have meant that living conditions have

not always been humane. Additionally, some issues with clothing and kit have, at times, undermined the decency agenda. However, standards of communal cleanliness have improved year on year, which is an achievement in such a challenging environment. Attempts have also been made to brighten up some areas through painting parties.

The HMIP inspection in 2022 reported that 63% of prisoners said they were treated with respect. Whilst there remain some tensions between staff and prisoners on the wings, which are likely to result in part from staff inexperience, there have been some notable successes. Two officers were personally recognised publicly for their outstanding endeavour and it has been widely noticed that the segregation unit staff have developed particular skills in understanding and handling difficult individuals.

3.2.3 How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Healthcare provision appears satisfactory compared to that in the community. However, it is noted that access to psychological therapies, either online or face-to-face, for both anxiety and mild to moderate depression, is limited.

3.2.4 How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

Progress towards successful resettlement has been limited for prisoners on short-term sentences and those who have reached the resettlement phase of their sentences, due in part to the short time available to have some impact on a helpful resettlement plan.

The work opportunities which could assist those re-entering the community are lacking, and any truly meaningful and worthwhile training in work experiences, which were available, have been curtailed by staff shortages and an extensive maintenance programme. Despite the prison's objective to improve the situation, there has been little progress in this area.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Will the Secretary of State:

- Address and improve His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) support for the Governor.
- Review the human and financial resources required to more effectively support the rehabilitative and resettlement role of local prisons.

TO HIS MAJESTY'S PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE

Will the Prison Service:

- Address the backlog in staff training and particularly control and restraint (C&R), basic, refresher and advanced training.
- Invest in improving systems, processes and expectations associated with the management of prisoners' property. Current arrangements often reflect insufficient care and attention to the management of prisoners' property, both internally and on transfer between prisons.

TO THE GOVERNOR

Will the Governor:

- Improve the current arrangements for prisoners' induction (particularly support for young adults) and implement quality assurance systems to make sure that prisoners new to custody are given all the information they need in their early days at Exeter. This should include information on the IMB.
- Improve systems and processes for the receipt, recording and distribution of prisoners' property to reduce losses and compensation costs.

3.4 Progress since the last report

The Board is pleased to note improvements in the following areas since the last report:

3.4.1 Safety

- Use of force – the improvement in coordination, management oversight, and quality assurance has been evident.
- Segregation unit—there has been a tangible improvement in the atmosphere and running of the unit this year.
- Instances of deliberate self-harm have reduced over the year but remain high.

3.4.2 Fair and humane treatment

- Cleanliness of communal areas and improvements to shower facilities.
- Improvement to the range of prisoner peer support schemes such as the Insider roles (see section 4.1).

3.4.3 Health and wellbeing

- Healthcare provision was generally satisfactory.
- The employment of a patient engagement lead in July 2022 addressed the backlog of complaints and allowed new complaints to be dealt with promptly and effectively. The lead also enabled focused health events in the prison, e.g. Hepatitis Awareness Day, World Heart Day, suicide prevention.

3.4.4 Progression and resettlement

- In education, Weston's staffing issues have largely been resolved with the appointment of a permanent curriculum manager, and with some structural reorganisation within the prison management of the education and vocational provision. These have enabled some organisational and curriculum developments to be planned for and early developmental changes initiated.
- The probation team did well in the recent inspection. They have robust processes and records in place and a tight public protection process.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Early in the year the Board was told about an imaginative project to improve the reception arrangements for newly arrived prisoners. A former prisoner who had spent four years in several prisons and had been released seven years ago had been employed by the Governor to train staff.

Since then some work has been done in redecorating the holding cells and installing new furniture. Televisions are to be fitted in the holding cells. Since the end of March 2022 the new Insiders scheme has provided for trained prisoners to work in reception, first night landings and on the wings. Insiders work with and check in on people through their first 14 days, including after they leave the first night landing. Every morning Insiders for A4 and C4 see every person that arrived the night before, offer a demonstration of the kiosk system and show them the key points of the wing and where to access everything when they are unlocked for domestics and exercise. Insiders not working the first night landings will perform their welfare checks on those in their first 14 days. Later in the day they give induction talks on C wing.

While the Board welcomes the physical improvements to reception and the deployment of Insiders, it did not think there has been as much progress as hoped for in improving the reception arrangements. The target time for processing a prisoner through reception is two hours and a key factor in this is the availability of healthcare staff. This still seems too long, whether for people new to prison or those familiar with the environment.

Previous annual reports have referred to the introduction of the body scanner in reception. This has continued to prove a useful tool in limiting the arrival in prison of illicit items, and three or four prisoners a week fail the initial body scan (see section 4.5).

Arrangements for prisoner induction remain a concern to the Board and it is noted that the UN from HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in November 2022 identified that:

‘The arrangements for inducting and monitoring prisoners in their first few weeks at the jail, when they are often most at risk, are inadequate. Regular checks are not done, and the supervision from healthcare staff for those prisoners who are substance misusers is poor.’

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Monthly incidents of self-harm have declined over the year. There were 27 incidents in December 2022 compared with 71 a year earlier. The monthly average has declined over the year, from over 60 to about 25. A pattern detected this year is for incidents of self-harm to involve prisoners who are currently on trial, on remand or on recall – less than 25% of incidents involve sentenced prisoners. There may also be a correlation with the lower incidence of self-harm among prisoners who are employed.

The Board understands that the safer custody team is going to study this more closely and see if there are lessons to be learned.

The recent UN in respect of HMP Exeter included concerns related to self-harm, violence and death in custody.

The prison regularly monitors individual prisoner behaviour in relation to self-harm and safety. A safety intervention meeting (SIM) is held weekly and led by a governor and attended by a multidisciplinary group. This meeting focuses exclusively on those deemed to be most vulnerable, such as those designated as ‘the critical few’(those individuals currently receiving more than one intervention or support), deliberate self-harmers, and those on an assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) or CSIP programme.

4.2.1 ACCTs

This year has seen a decline in the number of ACCTs opened, from an average of about 60 a month down to about 40. In recent years a large proportion of ACCTs opened were for newly arrived prisoners. A report by the PPO into a death in custody at Exeter some years previously highlighted an omission in noticing a warning signal in paperwork on the suicide and self-harm form on transfer of a prisoner from court. This may have led to over-caution in opening ACCTs, but the Board understood the reason for this. So the figures for the latest year suggest a better assessment of risk by officers. About a fifth of ACCTs are closed on first review.

4.2.2 Deaths in custody and PPO reports

There were three deaths in custody during 2022 and three deaths of prisoners who died within 14 days of release and whose deaths are now being investigated by the PPO under a policy introduced by them in September 2021. Each of these deaths is being investigated by the PPO. Each of these deaths is being investigated by the PPO who will highlight any actions they recommend the prison takes; and the circumstances will be considered by the Coroner in due course

In all instances of a death within the prison, the Board was informed in a timely way and a Board member was able to talk to staff who had been involved and to prisoners who might have been affected. In one instance, at the request of the Governor, a member of the Board viewed the available CCTV footage of the discovery of the individual, and the application of CPR. This difficult incident was dealt with in a professional way, including a speedy response from healthcare.

During the year, the PPO published three final reports, one on a death in June 2019, one in March 2020 and one in February 2021. These will now each be considered at an inquest. There are 10 inquests outstanding for deaths in custody, which range from June 2019 to the current day.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Monthly violent incidents have declined only very slightly over the past year. Ranging between 15 and 29 a month over this period, the average has been about 20, with higher figures in May, June and July 2022. Roughly three-quarters of such incidents have been prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, the remainder being assaults on staff. In both cases very few of the assaults were classified as serious.

Prison data (for the year to November 2022) shows Exeter as fourth highest reception prison for prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and second to Bristol in the

immediate comparator group. Equivalent data for assaults on staff puts Exeter as sixth among reception prisons and fourth in the comparator group.

We have been impressed with the close attention paid by the prison to individual cases of self-harm and violence. The weekly SIM(see section 4.2) discusses each individual on an ACCT or CSIP and records the latest information about the prisoner and measures taken to assist him. We accept that this focused approach may take time to deliver visible results, but we believe it is a valuable step towards reducing self-harm and violence in the prison.

4.3.1 Challenge, support and intervention plan(CSIP)

Towards the end of 2021 there were efforts to reboot the CSIP programme and to an extent this has continued during 2022. Evidence from the daily status reports and weekly SIMs shows that some prisoners are being identified as suitable for the programme and subsequently placed on CSIP. However, the same sources also show that there is regularly slippage in terms of conducting scheduled reviews in a timely manner. Equally, there is often a time lag between being placed on the programme and it becoming an active process. Although CSIP is in place, it does not yet seem to have become sufficiently embedded or to receive the priority it should. During the reporting period the Board undertook some focussed monitoring of CSIP by talking to some prisoners on the programme. While all spoken to were aware of their involvement in the programme, the extent to which they understood its purpose was variable. However, those receiving support because of their vulnerability valued the opportunity it provided in terms of prisoner/staff interaction.

4.4 Use of force

The Board has been pleased to see that the prison has continued to improve the management of use of force and to reduce the number of incidents where force is used. Most of the incidents recorded involved the use of guiding holds, with a much lower proportion involving full C&R. Most use of force was spontaneous and in response to a prisoner refusing to return to their cell when given a direct order to do so, and after attempts to engage with the prisoner had not been successful or because of threatening or abusive behaviour. The use of body worn cameras (BWCs) has continued to improve and, during the year, between 85% and 90% of incidents were caught on camera. A CSIP referral is made if force is used more than once on a prisoner.

The IMB welcomes the fact that more training has been able to take place in 2022, following the cancellation of all training during the pandemic. This has been particularly important as part of the preparations for the introduction of PAVA. Authority for the roll-out of PAVA was received in November, but no PAVA was used between then and the end of 2022.

Monthly multidisciplinary meetings take place to review use of force during the previous month. The IMB has a standing invitation to attend these meetings and a member has regularly done so. A range of statistics is presented at the meeting, with particular focus on equality and diversity. This has led to more detailed investigation of specific areas and age groups, including focus groups of prisoners. No discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) relating to UoF were submitted in 2022. It is rare for force to be used on young adults. Action points from the meeting are clearly recorded and followed up. The IMB member attending the meeting also has an opportunity to review a sample of BWC footage selected by them at random.

A member of the IMB had an opportunity to observe a planned use of force in October. This involved two prisoners who had barricaded themselves in a cell, and who appeared to be under the influence. The briefing was clear, the plan was professionally executed, and de-escalation techniques employed as soon as the prisoners had been extricated from the cell. The IMB member was able to talk to the prisoners immediately after they had been seen by a paramedic.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

This has continued to be a challenging area for the prison. The use of the body scanner in reception has enabled a number of items to be identified before they can reach the wings. During the year 46 newly arrived prisoners have spent some time in the segregation unit under the secreted items policy (SIP)(see section5.2.5). They are scanned each day and moved to the wings at the earliest opportunity.

There have been regular intel-led cell searches during the year, which have found a variety of items, including mobile phones, drugs, hooch and weapons. Prison staff are alert to throw-overs, especially given the proximity of public access to the prison perimeter.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 Accommodation

Throughout the year the ongoing refurbishment programme has progressed wing remained closed throughout the reporting period and vulnerable prisoners (VPs) were held on A4. F wing was closed part way through the year, leaving Exeter without the care provision it could offer and the loss of the palliative care facility, which had also been available to other establishments in the region. The new visitor centre remained under construction and was beset with various unforeseen delays.

The condition of prisoner cells continued to be variable and the Board has seen no improvement in the time taken to resolve reported minor repairs since its last report. The prison had a number of complaints about the state of cells (see section 5.7) and there is a clear need for improvement in this area.

The improved standards of cleanliness in communal areas have been sustained. The level of the rat infestation has reduced but rats are still seen in the grounds of the prison, often in proximity to badly stored refuse around the kitchen area.

5.1.2 Kit and clothing

Exeter moved to an own clothes policy from January 2022 as part of its decency agenda. Prisoners on the standard and enhanced levels of the incentives policy framework (IPF) scheme may apply to wear their own clothes outside of the working day. This includes remand and convicted prisoners. An issue that has been raised with the IMB is prisoners' timely access to their clothing once it has been sent in. If necessary, reception staff will top up the clothing of new arrivals with prison issue kit to ensure that for decency and hygiene purposes prisoners have more than one set of clothing. It is the prisoner's responsibility to launder their own clothes. Although prisoners have access to a washer and dryer on their wing, and once a week access to the washers in the clothing exchange store these arrangements can be unreliable. During the reporting period, A wing, in particular, experienced periods when there was a lack of clean prison issue kit such as towels and bedding. This has been attributed to hoarding by some prisoners, but also a build-up of laundry to be sent to HMP Channings Wood, which has a contract to undertake the washing of prison-issue kit. Such incidents are usually resolved quickly and the IMB has found the prison responsive to concerns raised by the IMB. It is not unusual for the IMB to receive verbal complaints about the cleanliness of the freshly laundered prison issue kit received back from Channings Wood.

5.1.3 Food

Given the limited spend available per prisoner (£2.20 per day), the food served at HMP Exeter has continued to be of a good quality. Food arrives at most of the wing serveries reasonably hot and the meals are enjoyed by the majority of prisoners. The Board commends the work of the kitchen and its catering for prisoners with a variety of dietary requirements. The Board has found the kitchen staff responsive to matters raised by the IMB and prisoners' views about the food are sought. Applications to the Board about food were about specific incidents, rather than identifying any systemic shortcomings.

The temporary servery on A4, reported on in 2021 and providing for vulnerable prisoners while B wing was being refurbished, has remained a less than ideal location. The Board received some complaints regarding the transport of the heavy thermal food containers, which allegedly did not keep the food sufficiently hot. There were also some complaints on A4 about cross-contamination through the use of utensils.

Staff monitoring of the serveries was variable. The wearing of servery clothing was inconsistent, although this did improve towards the end of the reporting period. There were also occasions when some serveries were not supervised by officers, meaning that the distribution of food was not observed.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 Introduction

Because of planned maintenance and refurbishment works to A wing, two locations have been used as the segregation unit during 2022. Up until late August the unit was, as in previous years, located in a basement on A wing (A1) containing eight cells, a special accommodation cell, adjudication room and shower room. For the last four months of the reporting period, the unit was relocated, on a temporary basis, to the basement of C wing (C1), a smaller area, but very similar in configuration to A1. As the Board has raised in previous reports, neither location provides a conducive environment to support the care and rehabilitation of some of the prison's most challenging prisoners. Physical conditions for prisoners are poor, despite efforts to keep the area clean, tidy and bright. Working conditions for prison staff and facilities, especially in C1, are poor. Within the constraints identified, segregation officers and orderlies have done their best to overcome the shortcomings for the benefit of those located there.

5.2.2 Staffing

As with other areas of the prison, staffing of the unit has not been stable. This has led to some communication difficulties with the IMB. More recently, a number of experienced segregation officers have re-joined the staffing of the unit and this has provided some additional stability. Leadership of the segregation unit has been clear in terms of the expectations and desired outcomes, but operational factors can impact on the achievement of these. Day-to-day management of the unit has improved.

During regular visits to the unit, the IMB has witnessed officers working supportively to build relationships and engage positively with some of the most disturbed and demanding prisoners at Exeter. Staff have been particularly helpful in talking IMB members through the list of residents and providing relevant information, which has informed our monitoring visits. Staff have evidenced a good knowledge of the men in their care and are aware of their individual needs and reintegration plans.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the commitment, patience and dedication of the segregation staff who work in one of the most challenging environments at Exeter.

5.2.3 Regime

By its very nature the segregation unit runs a restricted regime compared with normal location. However, prisoners in the unit have daily access to the kiosk, exercise and a shower and can make telephone calls from a corridor telephone. There is also access to library books, distraction packs and some in-cell education.

There have been improvements in access to wind-up radios and additional blankets. However, an issue frequently raised with the IMB by men held there is a concern for their in-cell property while in the unit and/or the timely access to their property during their stay. The management of, and priority given to, prisoners' property is a wider concern across the prison (see section 5.8) but for prisoners in segregation it can often make their stay more demanding and unsettling.

5.2.4 Segregation review boards (SRBs)

2022 has been the first year that the Board has been able to monitor the arrangements and impact of holding SRBs on fixed days/times of the week. While arrangements for the IMB to attend SRBs have improved over the last few years, the Board is not convinced that all the governors leading reviews follow and/or adhere to the local procedures agreed between the prison management and the IMB regarding the scheduling of post 72-hour SRBs. Too many reviews which could be appropriately scheduled for a Tuesday are being held on other days of the week. Equally, SRBs do not always seem to be given the priority they should have in terms of commitment to start times. This has been frustrating for the Board and in some cases undermined our ability to fully undertake our monitoring role. It also makes it difficult for other agencies to attend. However, the attendance of healthcare/mental health is now mostly routine.

One issue that has concerned the Board since the relocation of the segregation unit to C wing is the lack of an appropriate facility to hold SRBs. Reviews have been taking place in the unit office, which is not considered by the IMB to be an appropriate or professional location. This is because there are constant interruptions, telephones ringing and confidential documents and information around, and other staff not involved in the review are often present. This and the lack of suitable seating undermines the importance and overall professionalism of the process.

During 2022 the Board observed 46 SRBs. Interactions were carried out with skill and sensitivity. Governors were generally familiar with the case notes and reintegration plans and communicated effectively with the prisoner. The Board has not had occasion to query the outcome of any SRB it has reviewed and is content that SRB judgments are reasonable and that prisoners are treated fairly.

5.2.5 Days spent in segregation

The main reasons for prisoners being segregated are assault on another prisoner or member of staff, or a positive result on the reception body scanner, indicating secreted items.

Across the reporting year, a total of 2,068 days were spent in the segregation unit, which is a small decrease of 0.7% compared with 2021.

- 57% of days were spent on good order or discipline (GOoD) (57% in 2021).
- 35% of days were on cellular confinement 37% in 2021).
- **7% of days were spent on 53/4(6% in 2021).**

All prisoners indicating positive for secreted items on the reception body scanner are automatically written up as GOoD, and this proportionally high number reflects the increasing numbers received under the secreted items policy. Such status triggers particular monitoring and regular review by the prison, and the Board has noted that

these prisoners are rescanned regularly and leave the unit as soon as they present with a clear scan.

The Board reviews the monthly segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG) report, and with reference to days spent in segregation by minority ethnic prisoners during the reporting year there were 156 days for those prisoners, which is 8% of all days. This is fewer than in the previous year (19%).

In monitoring:

- the percentage of prisoners from ethnic minorities held in segregation compared with the total prison population
- the percentage of prisoners from ethnic minorities held in segregation compared with the total ethnic minority population

the Board is confident that there is no evidence to suggest that minority ethnic prisoners are disproportionately represented in the segregation unit.

During the year, 65 prisoners were held in the segregation unit on an ACCT. It is always a concern to the Board when prisoners on an open ACCT are held in the unit, because the physical and environmental conditions are so austere. However, monitoring of the segregation and ACCT documents shows that observations and reviews have been timely, and the Board has witnessed caring and sensitive interactions by those responsible for the prisoners' care.

Turnover in the unit continues to be high, with most men being returned to normal location rather than transferred. However, during the year the Board became very concerned about one prisoner who ended up spending over 120 days in segregation, and our uneasiness about this was raised with the head of safety and the Governor. The length of his stay was because there appeared to be no suitable exit strategy or reintegration plan that Exeter prison could put in place, because they were not equipped to deal with his specialised rehabilitation needs. Consequently, he became stuck in segregation, despite efforts by Exeter to try and transfer him to another prison, to have a fresh start. Throughout the management of this particular case, the IMB felt that the leadership at Exeter could have been better supported by HMPPS to bring about a swifter conclusion to the problem of the prisoner's inappropriate and prolonged stay in the unit. Eventually, he was transferred to another prison.

The special accommodation cell was used on nine occasions as a calming strategy when other approaches had failed or escalated. Seven of the prisoners held were on an open ACCT. The records show that the cell was normally occupied for a matter of hours, with the longest stay recorded at four hours and 10 minutes and the shortest stay 15 minutes. The IMB was not always informed of its use.

Although the number of prisoners held in the segregation unit with mental health issues continues to be a concern, in 2022 there were no prisoners held while awaiting a transfer to secure accommodation.

5.2.6 Adjudications

Adjudications have continued to take place daily and in 2022 there were 2,390 held. This is fewer than in 2021 (2,774), but the operational capacity (Opcap) has reduced. Cases referred to the independent adjudicator have continued to be a virtual process and, together with those referred to the police, numbered 275. These tend to be the most serious offences and represented 11.5% of all adjudications heard.

Only 36% (867) of all adjudications were proven on the first appearance, which suggests that there may still be a need to improve the presented evidence or the effectiveness made of the evidence captured. While the monthly SMARG document reports the number of adjudications proven, dismissed or not proceeded with, this is not evaluated in a way that may help inform improvements to the overall process.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

There has been a general improvement in the nature of the interactions between staff and prisoners, as observed by the Board. Some of this may be due to newer officers developing their skills as greater numbers of prisoners are unlocked at any one time. The Board regularly receives unprompted feedback from prisoners on their views on individual officers, and it is clear that some are very well regarded for their willingness to listen and engage. There have been noteworthy examples of good engagement in the segregation unit, and with prisoners on constant watch. We have noted that in the debriefing paper published by HMIP in November 2022, their survey of prisoners' views found that 63% of prisoners said that staff treated them with respect.

It has been a source of frustration that the keyworker scheme has again not been delivered to anywhere near the original targets. The reasons are understood, and Exeter is not alone in this, but this does feel like a missed opportunity.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Work to promote equality across all areas of prison life remains an aspiration. However, lack of a substantive diversity team leader for a significant part of the year resulted in a loss of momentum. The numbers of DIRFs dropped off during this time and diversity forums had to be paused. A successful recruitment drive for diversity and equalities representatives breathed new life into the forums but the transient nature of the population meant that representatives moved on and no continuity has been established.

Whilst each protected characteristic continues to have a nominated member of the SMT to lead development, there are signs that more operational input is needed, even on a part-time basis, to undertake consultation work and promote the forums. Using the kiosks to promote the forums had been less effective than was hoped and it was felt that more posters might work better.

Monthly equality action team meetings continued throughout the year and were well attended by stakeholders, including prisoner representatives who were actively engaged.

5.4.1 DIRFs

Efforts to publicise the DIRF procedure were assisted by the recruitment and training of a number of representatives and had improved significantly by the end of the year. In total, there were 52 DIRFs submitted during the year, of which 15 were upheld and 37 were not.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team has continued to provide excellent service to both prisoner and staff. It is well organized and exceptionally led. The team has provided leaders for prisoners of all the main faiths and where possible for the less common ones. It is

hard to overstate the positive impact of this team and the considerable pastoral and psychological value of their work for the prisoners' wellbeing, which often goes unrecognised. A member of the chaplaincy team visits the segregation unit daily. They also provide both spiritual and practical help to vulnerable prisoners, and in healthcare, reception and discharges. There is a regular presence across all the wings and contact is maintained with prisoners, whether of faith or no faith, if or when required. The skills and sensitivity of the chaplaincy team have been invaluable at times of grief and loss to prisoners and their support has been particularly evident at times of difficult issues and at deaths in custody in the prison.

Unrestricted collective worship in the chapel was made possible again in the early part of the year and the number of Sunday worshippers (in two groups) collectively average 40, which doubled for the Christmas services.

5.6 Incentives scheme

In March 2022, Exeter introduced the nationally initiated incentives policy framework (IPF), which refocused the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme. The framework provides prisoners with an opportunity to earn extra privileges through consistently displaying responsible and constructive attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, the framework offers staff a tool with which to effectively manage and challenge all inappropriate and anti-social behaviour and to reward and recognise the positive efforts of prisoners. In line with national requirements, Exeter developed its local policy. While the new framework is in place, and attempts have been made to incentivise attendance at education or work and engagement with substance misuse interventions etc, a cultural shift is required to fully achieve the intended ethos of the framework. Prison management acknowledge that there is a need to develop a better balance between a punitive approach to managing negative behaviour and encouraging and incentivising positive behaviour. On average, and across the year, use of the framework resulted in approximately 75% negative NOMIS entries and 25% positive entries. On average, 2% of prisoners are on the basic privilege level.

Implementation of the framework has been hindered by a combination of staffing pressures, building works involving accommodation and site upheaval, and accommodation and facilities that often provide limited scope to sufficiently reward enhanced prisoners. In its 2022 inspection report, HMIP noted that 'incentives for prisoners who engaged well needed development'. Attempts were made to address this last point towards the end of the year, when social areas of D wing (enhanced prisoners) were upgraded to include a small gym area. Plans for 2023 include the provision of opportunities for enhanced prisoners on D wing to be able to cook their own food.

An issue that has been noted by the IMB is that prisoners do not always know when they have been given an IPF behaviour warning, which has then been recorded on NOMIS. Sometimes this only comes to light when the prisoner applies for another job or change of status. As part of the review of the current IPF arrangements, it is intended to address and improve this issue.

5.7 Complaints

The prison produces a basic monthly report on complaints received from prisoners and this analyses the number and nature of complaints. Monitoring of timeliness of

response is considered weekly but this is not included in the monthly report. The Board usually receives the monthly report, which it reviews at its meetings.

During the reporting year, 583 complaints were made, which is a 57% decrease on the 1,018 total complaints in 2021. Some 26% of these were identified by the prison as not attended to within the seven-day timeframe, a decrease from the 41% in 2021.

Monitoring of the nature of the complaints made showed that:

- 235 complaints (40%) were about property.
- 115 complaints (20%) were about canteen, which also included complaints around financial accounting, with money allegedly charged wrongly to prisoner accounts (25).
- 45 complaints (8%) were about the state of cell accommodation and included bedrails, damp cells, heating and lighting.
- 35 complaints (6%) were about staff, for a variety of reasons, including allegations of bullying or excessive use of force.
- 10 complaints (2%) were about mail being opened when the prisoner argued that it should not have been.

Complaints about medical issues were normally sent on to healthcare to deal with.

The prison's quality assurance arrangements reported on in 2021 have continued, and resulted in ongoing improvements to the process. Through its scrutiny of a sample of six complaints a month, the Board has noticed that generally all relevant sections of the response form are completed and that written responses to prisoners are generally polite, factual and address the issues raised. The timeliness of responses has also improved.

5.8 Property

Although the number of prison complaints about property reduced, they still represent 40% of complaints to the prison (see section 5.7). A significant proportion of these concerned property that failed to accompany the prisoner when they moved from another prison to Exeter. Others were about allegations of property going missing after arrival at Exeter or being incorrectly recorded on property cards. A significant number of applications to the IMB also concern property.

It is not easy to determine whether the main cause of these complaints is a lack of effective systems, or whether the management of prisoners' property is given insufficient priority. The latter is a concern when prisoners move cells, or are taken to the segregation unit, and property is not dealt with promptly (see section 5.2.3). This is not a new problem and is one which seems to affect every prison.

The Board is aware that property issues absorb a considerable amount of time and effort and that the cost of compensating prisoners for lost items is significant. It is frustrating that better communication and systems and processes, perhaps utilising some form of barcoding arrangement, cannot be implemented at both a local and national level to improve this important aspect of prisoner life.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare in general

Information for this section of the report has been gathered from applications received by the IMB and subsequent conversations with prisoners, statistics provided by healthcare, meetings with the head of and deputy heads of healthcare, meetings with the GP lead, patient engagement lead and head of mental health, and attendance at the monthly local delivery and equality board meetings.

There have been two particular challenges identified for the provision of adequate healthcare in 2022:

1. In the first few months of the year Covid-19 infections remained high, both in prisoners and in staff, with association time and time in education being particularly affected. The effect of this on prisoner wellbeing was discussed in the 2021 annual report, following a piece of focused work by the IMB.
2. The awarding of new healthcare contracts to the Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, replacing the Practice Plus Group GP contract and Devon Partnership Trust mental health and social care contract. Although staff had the opportunity to be TUPE'd (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)), there have been significant resignations and subsequent unfilled posts, with an already stretched resource further diminished. At the end of 2022, there were approximately 40 vacant posts across the entire service, equating to 42% vacancies. Nursing and pharmacy technician vacancies are covered using temporary bank and agency staff. Senior posts have been filled but not all posts yet taken up.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 Services provided

Oxleas provides a 24/7 service for physical health care, with separate clinics for dentistry, physiotherapy, radiology, and ophthalmology. A sexual health clinic runs remotely, and visits from a hepatologist occur once a week. GP out-of-hours(OOH) services are now provided by OOH Starline as equivalent to community provision. There is no difference in the first night process if a patient arrives at reception OOH or at weekends.

6.2.2 Appointments

- There were 7,705 face-to-face appointments with a nurse and 2,071 with a GP.
- There were 385 phone consultations with a GP.
- The average wait to see a GP for a routine appointment was 11 days.
- The average wait to see a nurse was more variable depending on the reason, e.g. asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, average six and a half weeks; diabetes, five and a half weeks; bloods, one week; sexual health, three weeks; Covid and flu vaccinations, four weeks; and hepatitis B vaccinations, 10 weeks.

- Missed appointments accounted for 15% of all appointments.

6.2.3 *Medication*

Clarification from the GP lead was sought regarding the issuing of medication in reception and withdrawing of medication from prisoners. It was reassuring that no medications are stopped without discussion with the prisoner, either by letter or face to face, encouraging prisoners to see their time in prison as a new path in their life. A decision-making template is used, with no overarching policy except on controlled drugs. The patient on arrival in the prison is registered and a medication reconciliation is performed, with a review occurring within a few days.

It is an aim of the prison to increase in-cell possession of medication, which is hoped to empower prisoners to take some responsibility for their health, but the wait for lockable cabinets in cells continues.

In response to concerns and complaints of prisoners having to choose at times between regime and getting their medication, methadone prescriptions are now being dispensed from two hatches, and a Traka cabinet for routine medication is hoped to be functional in 2023. Four pharmacy technicians were also appointed to help with the dispensing of medication at hatches and reduce risks from queuing.

There is a full-time pharmacist for the cluster based at Channings Wood prison and as Exeter prison does not have a dispensing pharmacy there is not a requirement for an on-site pharmacist. A senior pharmacy technician is in post and is the pharmacy lead.

6.2.4 *Concerns and complaints*

Healthcare asks patients to raise a concern if they are unhappy with their care. In 2022, 187 concerns were registered and 65% were responded to within the standard of five days; 4% were upgraded to stage 1 complaints, and of these 0.5% were not resolved and required further escalation.

- In 2022, 24% of all applications received by the IMB concerned healthcare. Of these, 63% concerned medication, primarily delays in obtaining medication and medication being stopped. Almost exclusively the medications involved were either for mental health issues or pain relief.
- 25% of all healthcare concerns were about access to healthcare services, including perceived delays in response from healthcare and one about a failure in transfer to hospital for an X-ray due to staff shortages. Other miscellaneous concerns included anxiety around perceived poor Covid measures, attitude of staff and poor dental attention.

6.2.5 *New staffing appointments*

The appointment of a patient engagement lead to address prisoners' concerns and to organise focused health days in the prison, e.g. suicide, naloxone, hepatitis C and sexual health awareness, and light a candle for a loved one has reduced the concerns not answered within the standard time frame and improved health awareness issues amongst prisoners.

A transfer coordinator was appointed but left post during the year. A patient flow coordinator is expected to be appointed as part of the recruitment campaign.

There was a successful trial of a Cepheid machine for at-point testing of hepatitis C amongst prisoners and staff. It is hoped that a permanent machine for testing in reception will be functioning in 2023.

6.2.6 Allied services

Dentistry is provided by Time for Teeth, with an average wait of 99 days to be seen.

Opticians provide a service once a month, with 24% not seen within the six-week time frame.

In physiotherapy, 17% of patients were not seen within the six-week time frame and 41% in podiatry.

6.3 Mental health care and social care

Oxleas provides the mental health care service, operating between 8am and 8pm. The prison mental health team comprises:

- one clinical lead
- four senior mental health practitioners(0.6 hours)
- one senior mental health practitioner (0.4hours)
- one assistant practitioner (three days per week)
- a consultant psychiatrist, who is on site three days per week
- one learning disability learning nurse (0.4 hours)
- one older adults specialist and one autism specialist, both working across the cluster.

There are two current vacancies for a full-time senior mental health practitioner and a vacancy for a full-time attention deficit hyperactivity disorder specialist (across the cluster).

The psychology team comprises:

- one head of psychology(cross-cluster)
- one band seven psychological therapist
- two psychology assistants.

The number of mental health referrals in 2022 was1,432 and of these 1,300 were assessed. The discrepancies in these figures are due to individuals referred already being on the caseload, only recently assessed for the same issue or inappropriate referrals. The time frame standard for routine assessment is five days and for an urgent assessment is 24 to 48 hours; 97.4% of patients (1,267) were seen within this time frame.

In 2022, 563 ACCTs were initiated. The standard is for mental health staff to see all new ACCT referrals in the first 25 hours. Mental health achieved 97.33% attendance at the first review, with non-attendance being due to the individuals being out of the establishment. Subsequent ACCT reviews are attended by a member of healthcare which may or may not be a mental health care worker.

Between January 2022 and December 2022, there were 15 transfers to hospital secure mental health units, with 13 of these being within the standard of 28 days.

Essential training for operational staff was stopped during the pandemic. It has not yet been re-established. It is hoped that mental health awareness for staff will be included on one of the two training days per month for operational staff.

The social care unit (F wing) has been closed for refurbishment in 2022 and occupants of the unit transferred to other prisons.

Initiatives within the prison for peer support include THREADS (trust, hope, resilience, empathy, action, direction, strength), Insiders, Listeners and Buddies.

In February 2022, a quality network peer review, organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, showed that 83% of the standards for prison mental health services were achieved, collating information from patients, service staff and peer reviews. The patient experience scored 100%.

Areas identified for improvement included better privacy for consultations, specialised assessment for older people and mental health awareness training for prison staff.

6.4 Exercise and regime

6.4.1 *Exercise and physical activity*

It is well-documented that physical exercise brings a number of physical and mental health benefits. The reduction in Covid restrictions enabled the physical training team (PT) to increase the number of gym sessions available to prisoners. Up to eight 45-minute sessions per day with a group of six prisoners can use the weight room. Prisoners are encouraged to enrol onto courses to help develop their own gym technique as well as work towards gaining qualifications. Prisoners greatly value this time, although occasionally complain that they would like more slots, and the Board understands that the Governor has agreed to employ an additional member of staff in the PT department. It is hoped that the provision of an additional staff member will enable prisoners to have more focused specialised sessions suited to their ability and including the use of free weights.

The free weights remain at the back of the sports hall, due to the floor in the main activity room being unable to take the weight, and access to free weights has been limited by staff shortages. Prisoners have been encouraged to improve their technique using the machine weights instead. However, locating the free weights at the back of the sports hall has prevented the hall being used for other activities, such as football and basketball.

6.4.2 *Regime and time out of cell*

Early in the year intermittent outbreaks of Covid continued to impact on the regime and consequently on time out of cell. This was largely due to illness amongst the officers. Throughout the year a combination of staffing shortages and a regime with limited opportunities for purposeful activity has resulted in some prisoners spending long periods of the day locked in their cells. Weekend regimes were often more restricted. Where possible, exercise (fresh air) and domestics have been prioritised. However, the Board was aware that the regime often required prisoners to make choices between competing activities, for example between domestics and visiting

the library, the gym or employment. Prisoners have also reported that collecting medication can impact on time available for showers etc.

Working prisoners or those attending education experienced more time out of cell, but there were not enough work spaces for all prisoners to be employed fulltime. On average, unemployed prisoners had 60 minutes for exercise (fresh air) and 90 minutes for domestics, which included showers, using the kiosk and association with other prisoners) out of cell. Time out of cell is a concern, particularly given the cramped cell conditions. Towards the end of the year there were plans to reprofile the core day.

6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

There has been generally low morale in the team over the year. This reflected the findings in the HMIP unannounced inspection report (November 2022).

There had been a lot of negative change in the team in respect of their office space in the prison and the service provider. A health and safety risk due to radon being found in their office space led to a move in August 2022 to share with healthcare. The space they were given was insufficient for the team size and the rooms not fit for purpose, contributing to low morale. They have been offered more space but there are alterations needed and no timescale for completion. There is also no timescale for a return to their old office.

Low morale had also been contributed to by a change of employer. There was a move on 1 December 2022 from Exeter Drug Project to Change Grow Live via TUPE. This has caused some concerns, anxieties and lack of clarity of roles and posts, including the manager. There has also been a recruitment freeze. This has left the team under-resourced. In November 2022 the team were lacking three support workers and one administrator. Some current posts are not in the new proposed structure.

Caseloads contain many new referrals, with a lot of churn with prisoners not staying long, which puts pressure on the system. The team have told us that at times they have felt a disconnect between prison strategy and reality and did not feel valued by the prison staff. However, towards the end of the year relationships were improving.

There were good links with community teams all run locally by Exeter Drug Project, which will continue even with the change in provider. There have been two drug and weapon amnesties, with some success, and the events have improved through experience. The most prevalent illicit drugs are prescription drugs and hooch. The team works with all court leavers and prisoners prior to release to ensure that a month in advance they have their prescription.

Prisoners released while still reliant on opioid drugs are now trained in the use of naloxone and currently these prisoners are released with a syringe dose for overdose.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

As the effects of the Covid pandemic retreated, it was hoped that there would be increased attendance at education and vocational courses by prisoners. However, a return to full function was prevented by three factors. First, staffing shortages (illness and recruitment) often meant that there were insufficient prison staff to allow for some to accompany prisoners to classes. Second, many of the prisoners were reluctant to attend and some wing staff are reported not to have insisted. Third, staff arrangements for annual leave by Weston College led to some cancellation of classes.

During 2022 the proportion of remand prisoners increased, making short stays even more frequent. The demand for induction classes and assessment rose. The education staff needed to provide short courses that still allowed for progression when the prisoners moved on. This work is ongoing.

We note that the failure to provide adequate education and vocational courses contributed to the urgent notification following the HMIP inspection in November. However, there is a commitment by the senior team and those responsible for courses and plans to tackle the issues, and some excellent work is already underway.

7.1.1 *Education courses*

Education is provided by Weston College.

All prisoners new to the prison regime are assessed on induction and advised about appropriate courses. They are offered maths, English, functional skills, English as a second language, art, healthy living, peer mentoring, customer services, painting and decorating, cleaning and advanced cleaning. Some of these courses are a prerequisite for employment in the prison or offer certification in preparation for employment on the outside. Increasingly these are offered as short courses and will form part of vocational pathways. There is a recognition that the curriculum has not developed to meet the prisoners 'varied needs and steps towards making the offer more relevant are already underway, such as staffing changes and planned pathways.

Assessment at induction reveals that the majority of new prisoners are below level 3 in maths and English, their functional level being mostly 1-2. All prisoners are screened for neurodiversity issues and the education team are increasingly, for those who require it, using in-depth screening to identify further needs. The appointment of a neurodiversity support officer is seen as a step forward.

In addition, several related initiatives are becoming well established in HMP Exeter, for example Storybook Dads and the Shannon Trust's literacy programme.

Creating a culture which normalises participating in pathways that progress towards a better future on release is severely challenged within HMP Exeter, by the turnover of prisoners, the attitudes of some prisoners and some wing staff, the curriculum on offer, and the lack of staffing to enable regular access to courses. Relevant staff are well aware of these difficulties, and plans have been initiated to improve the situation at different levels.

7.1.2 Attitude of prisoners and staff

A persistent issue remains that many prisoners are not enthusiastic about education, some seeing it as in conflict with employment. Many prisoners are reluctant to take up the opportunities for classes, despite inducements and requirements. The prison has introduced (or maintained) a number of inducements, but these are also compromised by intermittent classes and a failure by some wing staff to adequately encourage participation. Teaching staff have attempted to provide in-cell work when *prisoners were not able to attend in person*.

The questionnaire issued to 150 prisoners before the HMIP visit in November 2022 revealed a worrying low level of belief in the ease of entry into education or vocational skills training and in their value. Only 36% believed education, and 23% believed that vocational and skill training, would help on release; 60% of them also reported that the staff did not encourage them to attend (although 37% of the staff did). It is appreciated that many prisoners have had poor experiences of formal education in their lives, but taking up these opportunities should bring more confidence.

Inducements to take up courses have been increased during 2022. Educational involvement was already paid at the same rate as employment. All D wing prisoners are now required to take a course (unless their employment prevents this) as part of their enhanced conditions. D wing has been redesignated as the education centre. The personal progress file (PPF) is designed to make explicit a prisoner's achievement in education as well as all other areas of prison life. Token payments are made for bringing the PPF to classes. Curriculum changes have brought a closer link between classes and employment (e.g. peer mentoring for Insiders, or cleaning certifications) and other curriculum changes are being developed.

7.1.3 Staffing of courses

In 2022 there were some staffing issues that affected the provision of courses and the management of the education staff. The curriculum manager left in June, and an interim manager provided cover until the post was filled with a permanent appointee in the autumn. In addition, the annual leave arrangements were compromised by Covid disruptions, and arrangements for annual leave for Weston College staff led to interruptions to courses during the summer.

There have been other staffing changes, including maternity leave. Following the UN, some hierarchical changes have been made to the prison structure to improve participation in educational and vocational courses.

7.1.4 Library

In the same questionnaire mentioned above, there was praise for the library by the prisoners who had used it. As with other parts of the prison, the library had been significantly affected by Covid. While there is currently a vacancy for a library assistant, the service is operating well. The librarian made every effort to ensure books were available on each wing and to try and respond to any particular requests when the library was inaccessible.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Workshop activities were noted by Ofsted at the inspection in November for creating a 'calm and purposeful environment'. HMP Exeter scores well, against comparable prisons, in employment on release statistics, and was first among 25 in November 2022.

Courses are offered in painting and decorating and cleaning, and there are plans to extend to hospitality and catering, waste management, and construction, where it is hoped to attract partnerships with firms on the outside, using release on temporary licence where possible. Such plans are challenged by the significant turnover in the prison population. Some commendable efforts in this respect (for example, the Clink in the kitchens) resulted in only one prisoner achieving an NVQ. The pathways are intended to structure the prisoner's journey through purposeful activity in this and other prisons and prepare him for employment on the outside. Increasing use of the careers officers is also envisaged. As noted above, there is increasingly an attempt to integrate the education and vocational offerings, through the curriculum. The workshop area has been redesignated the employment zone.

7.3 Family contact

The main visitor centre has been on a temporary footing all year, with the new centre scheduled to open in April or May 2023. A new security screening process is in place for all visitors.

Social video calls – whilst the immediate need for these calls (formerly provided by Purple Visits) diminished, they are still of value, particularly for those prisoners with remote families and friends. They remain available and the Board hopes that a hybrid visits regime would be the model for the future, though there are cost implications.

7.4 Resettlement

The probation team came out well in the recent inspection. They have robust processes and records in place and a tight public protection process. Exeter prisoners are allocated a prison offender manager (POM), whether sentenced or on remand, which is unusual. The OMiC (offender management in custody) model is followed. The team should have three probation officers and nine POMs, but has been running at least 0.5 of a probation officer under staff throughout the year. There were 545 licensed recalls to HMP Exeter in 2022.

A small sample of prisoners expressed their view that they could generally get the housing and support that they need if they asked for it or engaged when offered.

The large remand population at HMP Exeter means the employment and resettlement team's figures for release employment and housing do not fit neatly into the national statistical requirements. Remand prisoners who receive custodial sentences move to other prisons and those who do not receive custodial sentences are released immediately, so only assessment and emergency work can be done with them whilst at HMP Exeter. This was largely because the new contracts under the integrated probation service do not cover remand prisoners as the previous CRC contracts did.

A new employment lead started in the summer. Delays in obtaining ID and bank accounts had caused problems for prisoners in obtaining employment and there were issues with the Department of Work and Pensions not sharing information. Employer industry events are held regularly, e.g. Construction, manufacturing and retail, and there are some good links with employers locally in the southwest. There are also regular resettlement events, such as Check Out Work Matters and Check Out Housing Matters, giving advice and information to pre-release prisoners.

The resettlement team criteria and make-up have changed significantly since its move from Catch 22 in 2021. The team has been consistently short of staff throughout the year, which has led to a degree of fire-fighting. Again, remand prisoners are not able to access the same level of input as sentenced prisoners. Housing referrals are outsourced but the timescales for prisoners being assessed by community rehabilitative services is long. The heavy caseloads of probation officers impact on the work of the resettlement team. A strategic housing specialist has recently been appointed to help address barriers to accessing housing.

Between January and December 2022 there were between 51% and 84% releases to sustainable accommodation (address listed for friend or family, private rental, social rental supported housing or transient) and between 16% and 38% unsustainable releases (homeless, no address listed). It should be noted that all prisoners still have a duty to make a referral to the council, so even if homeless on release they may be placed in accommodation for the first night.

The departure lounge continues to provide regular drop-in services, and prisoners are visited to offer advice, information, phone charging, clothing etc. before release. This service is highly thought of by prisoners and staff.

The work of the IMB

Board support

The Board was supported throughout the year by the Governor and the SMT. The Governor attended for part of almost every regular Board meeting and fielded a deputy for those he could not attend personally. Responses to matters or queries raised in rota reports have been prompt and considered.

Administratively, the work of the Board has been ably supported by the IMB Clerk.

The Board lost two experienced members during the reporting period and no new members were appointed. Members participated in a regional recruitment scheme, from which it is hoped that new members will be appointed shortly.

During the year the Board undertook a period of focused monitoring concerning CSIP (see section 4.3.1).

The Board has continued to meet monthly in person with some attendance by telephone link. The chair participated in the regular regional chairs' meetings.

Members of the IMB were invited to undertake SPEAR (spontaneous protection enabling accelerated response) training, but the arrangements were fraught with problems, which caused cancellations and during the reporting period only one member was actually trained.

Although the Board returned to full direct monitoring throughout 2022, the arrangements to enable prisoners to contact the Board using the 0800 applications phone line service continued to function in tandem with the usual direct applications process. The 0800 service was not often used by prisoners.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the establishment	338
Total number of segregation reviews attended	46

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	14	8
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives, sanctions	0	3
C	Equality	8	8
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	11	3
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	9	5
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	4
F	Food and kitchens	5	8
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	37	34
H1	Property within this establishment	12	16
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	5	8
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	10	13
I	Sentence management, including Home Detention Curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	8	2
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	20	22
K	Transfers	5	4
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	32	25
	Total number of applications	184	163

The Board received 135 written applications in 2022 but a number of these referred to more than one problem which fell under various subject headings, so the table above refers to 163 matters raised across 135 written applications.

Applications to the Board decreased by approximately 27% in 2022.

Healthcare as a category continues to be the subject of the highest number of applications. Otherwise, the most concerning area is around property, both in terms of numbers of applications and the level of personal concern amongst prisoners and the collateral problems these raise.

Glossary of abbreviations used in this report

ACCT	Assessment, care in custody and teamwork
BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
BWC	body-worn camera
C&R	control and restraint
CC	cellular confinement
CES	clothing exchange store
CNA	certified normal accommodation
CRC	community rehabilitation company
CSIP	Challenge, support and intervention plan
CSRA	cell sharing risk assessment
CSU	Care and separation unit
DIC	death in custody
DIRF	Discrimination incident reporting form
DTR	duty to refer
EAT	Equalities and action team
GFSL	Government Facility Services Limited
GOoD	Good order or discipline
HMIP	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
IA	Independent adjudicator
IPF	Incentive policy framework (replaces IEP)
LDQB	Local Delivery and Equalities Board
MDT	mandatory drug testing
OOH	out of hours
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture
POM	Prison offender management
PPF	Personal progress file
PPO	Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
PT	physical training
SA	Special accommodation
SaSH	suicide and self-harm
SIM	Safety intervention meeting
SIP	Secreted items policy
SMARG	Segregation monitoring and review group
SMT	senior management team
SRB	Segregation Review Board
UN	Urgent notification
UoF	use of force
VP	vulnerable prisoner



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