



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

**For reporting year  
01 April 2022 – 31 March 2023**

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## Introductory sections 1 - 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

### 2. Description of the establishment

HMP Oakwood is a category C training/designated resettlement prison located near to Wolverhampton. It is located adjacent to HMP Featherstone and HMP/YOI Brinsford.

HMP Oakwood opened in 2012 and is operated by G4S through a contract with His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS). It has an operational capacity for 2106 prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

The prison is a modern facility, which is well maintained, clean and tidy.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

A controller, deputy controller and assistant controller from HMPPS are based within the prison and are active in the control and management of the contract between HMPPS and G4S.

The contracted providers are detailed in Annex A.

There were some 20 Prisoner-Led Initiative (PLI) groups providing regular help and support to prisoners throughout the prison. During the reporting year, these have been rationalised and there are now four PLIs and 11 peer support services. See Annex B.

The prison has introduced an in-house TV channel, which is being used by many departments and PLIs to disseminate information to prisoners. The Board has begun discussions with the Media Team to produce a series of short programmes detailing the remit of their role in the prison. Prisoners are also able to access religious services via the TV.

### **3. Key points**

#### **3.1 Main findings**

##### **Safety**

- Prisoners bringing illicit items into the prison on transfer is of concern and raises the issue of checks being made by the transferring prison.
- There has been a substantial increase in the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) since the new equipment has been made available.
- There have been ongoing issues in relation to the use of cuffs when a prisoner is in hospital for a length of time and this matter has been raised by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO).
- There has been a decrease in the number of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) books opened and in the number of incidents of self-harm.

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

- The relationships between staff and prisoners are viewed, by the Board, as generally good. However, the key worker system, whilst developing, is seen as a work in progress.
- Throughout the prison, the serveries have been a regular cause of complaint and concern in respect of the standards and use of personal protective equipment (PPE), equipment not working, and the time taken for repairs. The provision of food has also been a source of complaints in terms of the quality and portion sizes and the levels of waste generated from the same food items.
- The Care and Segregation Unit (CSU) is a supportive, fair, and caring regime. However, the Board remains concerned with the use of the CSU for those prisoners with complex mental health needs.
- Property remains an issue with property losses from transferring prisons and on occasions within HMP Oakwood. This has led to a number of compensation claims.

##### **Health and wellbeing**

- The healthcare provider, Practice Plus Group (PPG), continues to provide a level of care equivalent to that provided in the community.
- The Patient Experience Lead holds monthly concerns clinics for prisoners with healthcare and prescribing concerns but who are not in the healthcare system. This provides the opportunity for the prisoners to discuss their concerns and for appropriate appointments to be made accordingly.
- Following healthcare concerns from prisoners due for release, plans were put in place towards the end of the reporting period to provide a discharge lounge where prisoners can book in to see the clinical team prior to their release.

- The Board is concerned that there has been a vacancy for a psychologist for the duration of the reporting period.
- All transfers to a secure mental health facility go over the 28-day stipulated timeframe. They are monitored on a weekly basis with a regional hospital escalation meeting and escalated fortnightly with commissioners. The Board remains concerned about the lack of availability of forensic, secure places which means prisoners remain in the CSU without the necessary mental health support

### **Progression and resettlement**

- Notwithstanding that Novus has made some improvements, the Board is still concerned about the quality and delivery of some courses.
- The Board conducted an education survey which had a mixed response. The general feeling seemed to be that those who are on courses very much appreciate the work of the tutors, but it is difficult for those who are unable to gain a place.
- Library usage is improving but has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. For the majority of the past year the library has been without a manager.
- Farms and Gardens have managed to complete many of their plans over the reporting year. One large area of their land that was previously unusable due to poor drainage, has now been redeveloped and contains over 100 new fruit trees and a picnic area for staff members to use. The team do provide food for the kitchens but have been frustrated by the lack of creativity in using it to provide meals. They are planning to work with some of the cooks to help them create some more “interesting” menus.
- In December 2022 there were 49 prisoners serving an imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence including 24 who had been recalled. Almost 90% had exceeded their original tariff with 65% exceeding it by 10 years or more.

## **3.2 Main areas for development**

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

- The Board is concerned that there has been a vacancy for a Psychologist for the duration of the reporting period. A campaign to recruit a Psychologist is ongoing but reports indicate that recruitment is difficult, with too few Psychologists who are either available or willing to work within a prison environment. The career pathway, training and recruitment of Psychologists should be addressed to increase the numbers and promote a positive and attractive career pathway within the Prison Service.

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

- Since the implementation of the Prisoner Property Policy Framework on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the Board remains concerned that it is still seeing a lack of adherence to the policy, particularly with missing property from incoming prisoners. Can this ongoing concern be addressed?

## **TO THE DIRECTOR**

- With 17% of adjudications either dismissed or not proceeded with, a review of the reasons for dismissal or not proceeded with should be considered, with a view to reducing the percentage.
- The Board is concerned that prisoners still do not appear to understand the difference between a complaint and a request. Can the Director consider an awareness campaign to better inform the prisoners of the process?
- Can the Director consider what further steps can be taken, in addition to quality checks that are already being carried out, to improve the quality and legibility of the responses to complaints? Some replies neither address the complaint nor indicate what follow up has been completed.
- Can the Director consider what steps can be taken to ensure that food complaints are monitored by the complaints process? In addition, can the Director take steps to ensure that the complaints books that should be held on each of the serveries are available and that they are monitored by Aramark? Can the Director consider action to ensure that all complaints regarding food submitted to Aramark via the kiosks are monitored and responded to?
- Can the Director take steps to address the standard of hygiene on the serveries? Issues of dirty or incomplete Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are regularly reported on the Board's Rota Report, as are concerns about missing or broken equipment. Repairs to broken kitchen equipment are often prolonged.
- As noted in Section 5.3, the number of key worker sessions delivered during the reporting year was significantly below target. Can the Director consider setting targets, which are more realistic? Is the Director confident that key worker resources are sufficient to meet targets going forward?
- At times key worker case notes indicate a tick box approach to the sessions. Can the Director consider how the quality of key worker sessions can be improved to ensure that meaningful discussions take place with prisoners?

### **3.3 Response to last report**

<b>Issue raised</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>Minister</b>		
1. Concern was expressed that the Board had not been invited to attend relevant inquests during the reporting year. A request for guidance from the Chief Coroner was made regarding the importance of notifying	A letter was received from the Staffordshire South Coroner explaining that they had held very few inquests in recent times and that IMB Oakwood would be added to the list of organisations to be notified when such	The Board has now been added to the list.

<b>Issue raised</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
IMBs of inquests concerning prisoners (para 4.2) as referred to in the IMB reference book in relation to deaths in custody.	inquests are held.	
2. The Minister commented, in September 2021, that the Prisoners' Property Framework Policy was due to be published in early 2022. The Board was concerned that after three years of expressing concerns about prisoners' property in the Annual Reports, the framework had still not been published.	It was explained in a letter from the Minister of State for Justice that the delay was a result of the extensive consultation that took place with internal and external stakeholders.	The framework was published on August 1 <sup>st</sup> 2022.
<b>Prison Service</b>		
3. The arrangements for the resettlement of prisoners continue to be a cause for concern particularly in locating accommodation for prisoners, especially high-risk prisoners and prisoners requiring relocation out of the local area.	HMPPS were consulting on guidance that will provide a greater level of specifics on the approach to pre-release preparation and the role of the pre-release teams, the 'in custody' pre-release service.	The Resettlement and Pre-Release Planning Guidance Document V.2 was published in October 2022. Some improvements have been seen but property complaints are still too high.
4. The transfer of prisoners, who are deemed to have severe mental health needs to appropriate mental health establishments is still subject to long delays.	The shortage of appropriate places continues to be problematic and of concern. There has been no response to indicate when, or if, this situation will improve.	There has been no progress to report.
<b>Prison Director</b>		
5. Issues concerning the	The prison has repeatedly	There has been no



Issue raised	Response given	Progress
serveries in respect of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the quality and variety of the food provided are a recurring cause for concern.	followed up the Board's concerns regarding PPE and the supervision of serveries, which has resulted in an improvement in standards. However, it has proved challenging to maintain the standards on a consistent basis.	noticeable improvement in either the quality or variety of the food provided during the reporting period.  The Board will continue to monitor service standards and PPE on serveries and the quality of food provided to prisoners.
6. Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF) scrutiny meetings with HMPs Brinsford and Featherstone should be reconvened in order to bring some external scrutiny to the process.	The prison asked to be included in the external scrutiny meetings but was advised by HMPPS that there was no scope for inclusion and the request was refused.	Nothing further to report.
7. The Independent Adjudicator (IA) has still to return to the prison, with a remote system in use. The Board wants to join some of the remote IA adjudications. A system of notification should be put in place.	The IA is now conducting all hearings remotely.	The Board now receives notification of the IA's remote hearings.
8. With a regular intake of new staff throughout the reporting year what has been done to improve the quality of written case notes by staff? The Board suggested that senior managers should implement a programme of additional training.	Additional training has been implemented.	Nothing further to report

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception**

The Board has observed the reception and induction of prisoners over the reporting year and the Board has also produced a letter on its role, which is given to all prisoners at induction. The Board has noted a high degree of care and professionalism for those prisoners arriving at HMP Oakwood. The Board is, however, concerned about the ongoing problems of prisoners arriving very late and the long journeys that have been made in a very small cell on the transport vehicle.

The Board is also concerned about the following:

- The ongoing problem of property not being transferred with the prisoner, which can result in loss of clothing and personal property, some of which cannot be replaced.
- Prisoners arriving with illicit items and not being checked by the transferring prison.

The Board is of the view that the prison is a safe and secure environment for prisoners.

#### **4.2 Suicide and Self Harm, deaths in custody**

The number of ACCTs opened during the reporting year was 403 compared to 497 in the previous year. The Board has daily information on the ACCTs as part of the Risk Register and includes visits to see prisoners on an ACCT as part of its rota duties. On occasion members attend the ACCT reviews and the Board is pleased to note that those attended are very thorough and comprehensive and address the needs of the prisoner and any areas of risk or concern. The Board has looked at the ACCT reports and, in most cases, they are of a satisfactory standard.

The number of self-harm incidents during the year was 1139 compared to 1406 the previous reporting year. These incidents are monitored on a daily basis by the Board by way of the Duty Director Report. Where there are several incidents pertaining to the same prisoner these are followed up and the prisoner is seen by a member of the Board. Some of the incidents of self-harm have been triggered by IPP prisoners following the outcome of the government's decision not to accept the Justice Committee's recent recommendation to implement a resentencing exercise for those serving an IPP sentence. Some incidents can be to influence a transfer out of the prison. There are a range of PLIs in place to support prisoners who self-harm. See Annex B.

During the course of the reporting year there has been one death in custody. The Board monitored very closely the work that was undertaken by both the prison and Practice Plus and was impressed with the way they all supported the prisoner concerned throughout the period of terminal care. In addition, the Police and

Undertaker both showed great respect to the deceased. There was also support for the prisoner by a prisoner carer and this was appreciated by all those concerned.

The PPO has reported on one case during the reporting year, making recommendations in relation to

- the use of Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) when a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) was in place
- the use of restraints on a visit to hospital five days before the prisoner died
- the slowness of response that took place prior to and during the emergency response

The Board will continue to monitor the recommendations of the PPO.

#### **4.3 Violence and Violence Reduction**

The Board has seen an overall reduction in incidents of violence. There have been 270 incidents of prisoner-on-prisoner violence over the reporting year compared to 324 during the previous reporting year. There have also been 64 incidents of violence against staff compared to 99 the previous year.

There were 432 referrals in relation to Challenge Support Intervention Plans (CSIPs) with 232 CSIPs being opened compared to 568 referrals in the previous year and 247 plans opened.

The prison has taken a number of steps to address violence related issues, including the establishment of a Violence Reduction meeting under the Chair of the Director. The Terms of Reference for the group can be seen in Annex C.

Violent incidents occur for a range of issues, but a key area is in relation to debt.

The following are some of the steps taken as a result of the meeting:

- Increased communication with Practice Plus. Inclusion teams are able to identify prisoners who are likely to become involved in violence, particularly those who are vulnerable and at risk of becoming a victim of violence, debt or exploitation.
- Implementing live intervention plans with the perpetrators of violence. There has been focussed work with prisoners under the age of 30. In-cell work is in place for those who cannot go to the Skills Workshops or Education. This also includes all vulnerable groups in order to help them to be self-sufficient and not get into debt.
- Work is taking place to identify the perpetrators of debt and to support those in debt to manage their finances and challenge those who are victimising others.
- The Hidden Disabilities Project has assisted identification of prisoners with complex needs. Prisoners with complex needs can often experience negative outcomes when they are not considered. Arrangements are made to address their needs in a proactive way. Those prisoners who are relocated to the CSU have a structured timetable assisted by PLIs to address their wellbeing needs.

- Complex Case and Dual Risk Management has been reviewed and adapted to meet the changing needs of the prison population and multi-disciplinary reviews are now part of the approach to management of risk.
- Work has commenced on identifying care leavers who struggle with coping strategies and require extra support. This work also has PLI support.

#### **4.4 Use of Force**

There were weekly Use of Force (UoF) meetings established at the beginning of the reporting year but unfortunately it was not possible to maintain these as the Lead Officer was often used to undertake additional duties. It has been a challenge to get managers to attend these meetings. The meetings have been invaluable for looking at BWC recordings of the UoF and from the viewings monitor how the incident has been recorded. There have been a few occasions when some aspect of the incident has caused concern and Senior Managers have been able to address this with the staff concerned. The Board is still not being advised of all planned UoF interventions.

In the reporting year there were 511 UoF incidents compared to 560 the previous year.

In August 2022 the new BWC were introduced and now 80% of incidents are recorded compared to 40% with the previous cameras.

There are currently six UoF instructors at HMP Oakwood.

#### **4.5 Preventing Illicit items**

The Board regularly attends Security Meetings and is kept up to date on the actions being taken to prevent the entry of drugs, alcohol, and other illicit items, for example mobile phones and weapons. The following are some examples:

- Daily searches of all staff bags through the X-Ray machine
- Prisoners who arrive at the prison are body scanned unless they have a recognised exemption
- Prisoners are cell searched as a result of intelligence reports being submitted
- Advanced cell searches are undertaken
- Visitors are searched by specialist staff and dogs on entry
- CCTV is in operation throughout the prison
- The perimeter wall is also checked periodically by Board members

There were 911 targeted cell searches completed in the reporting year. In addition, random cell searches happen daily. The Security Department randomly monitor 50% of prisoners when leaving work areas.

During the reporting year the prison referred 109 incidents to the Police. 42 of these were actioned and 67 were referred back for internal adjudication.

There were 1247 mandatory drug tests (MDTs) undertaken during 2021 to 2022 and 1249 in the current reporting year.

During the reporting year out of a total of 972 finds, drugs have been found on 260 occasions. For the previous year out of a total of 881 finds, drugs were found on 155 occasions.

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

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

The Board's regular monitoring of the serveries and the quality and portion sizes of the food provided has been a regular cause for concern throughout the reporting year. Prisoners have commented on the lack of nutritional value of some of the menus and portion sizes.

Monitoring has identified a number of issues during the reporting year that were previously highlighted in the Board's Annual Report of 2021 to 2022, namely:

- Equipment not working and delays in effecting repairs
- Correct PPE not being worn by servery workers
- The Food Complaints Books not always available
- Instances of mouldy food delivered to the serveries

It is noticeable that more prisoners are ordering and cooking their own food.

Whilst Aramark should be congratulated for maintaining continuity of high-volume catering including special diets, the Board's concerns about food complaints remain.

It will be a challenge to address the above food-related concerns without an increase in the daily food budget of £2.39 per prisoner, given the general increase with food costs.

### **5.2 Segregation**

The CSU has 24 standard cells with two cells providing special accommodation and a constant watch cell. It is a clean and well-maintained unit. The special accommodation was used on one occasion during the reporting period.

Weekly visits to the CSU take place by the Board, who speak with all prisoners to monitor their health and wellbeing. In addition, welfare visits are made to prisoners on constant watch, refusing food or engaging in dirty protests, or when the Board are alerted to any health/welfare concerns. The Board provides a letter for all new admissions to the CSU explaining the Board's role and how we can be contacted.

There were 16 prisoners held in the CSU for more than 42 days and two prisoners for more than 84 days. The prison was proactive throughout, in endeavouring to relocate these prisoners to more appropriate secure psychiatric units.

Timely reviews were held and were invariably well managed. The Board attends all reviews, observing 258 reviews during the period, compared to 262 the previous year.

ACCTs are generally well-managed in the CSU. During the reporting period 46 prisoners arrived in CSU with ACCTs already opened, 24 were opened whilst in the CSU and 13 were opened for those on constant watch.

Adjudications continued to take place throughout the reporting period within the CSU and on two other houseblocks.

Number of Adjudications 2022 to 2023	Adjudication not proceeded with (NPW) or dismissed	Percentage
6341	1057	17%

17% of all adjudications were either dismissed or NPW during the reported period. This is an area that the Board will continue to monitor during the next reporting period. It is noted that the number of adjudications either NPW or dismissed does include both prisoners in double cells who are reported for an adjudication at which the case against the offending prisoner is found proven and the non-offending prisoner's case is dismissed.

The CSU continues to be well-managed at First-Line Manager (FLM) and Senior Manager Team (SMT) level. The Board commends the CSU staff for the respect, patience and support provided to prisoners, particularly those with significant mental health issues.

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

The prison has been proactive throughout the reporting year in the recruitment of staff with a succession of cohorts of staff in training.

During the reporting year, there were 307 starters and 318 leavers.

There are 274 badged staff on the houseblocks compared with 244 for the previous reporting year, 24 operational and non-operational E1 managerial posts and 56 First Line Managers (FLMs).

The relationship between staff and prisoners was observed by the Board to be generally good throughout the prolonged lockdown and post lockdown periods as the prison regime evolved towards normality. Operational requirements to keep prisoners protected and safe were maintained throughout. Management and staff are commended for this.

The number of key worker sessions completed during the reporting period was 33,043 against a target of 52,337. Mindful of the number and experience of new staff on the houseblocks and observing the quality of the case notes for some of the key worker sessions, the Board suggests that ongoing reviewing of the quality of case notes and appropriate follow up training be maintained.

A report from HM Inspectorate of Prisons in May 2021 found that HMP Oakwood "had a culture of respectful treatment and high expectations of prisoners. The prison has a friendly and positive atmosphere in which people are treated with respect and expectations are high". It is the Board's view that this is still the case during the reporting year.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

There is an Equality Team led by a member of the SMT and a team of prisoner-led equality and care worker representatives covering all areas of the prison. There is a

monthly equalities' newsletter, LGBT News, and updates and news of forthcoming awareness days are also supported by Oakwood Media and posters.

Protected Characteristics Meetings and Transgender Case Board Reviews are both held bi-monthly.

There were 131 DIRFs submitted during the reporting year of which 72 related to race. 55% of DIRFS were not proven. In the previous reporting year 159 DIRFs were submitted, of which 99 related to race. 75% were found not proven. This is an area that the Board will monitor closely going forward.

At the end of March 2023, 558 prisoners were identified as having a disability, which equated to 27% of the total population. With some prisoners declaring having more than one disability, a total of 848 disabilities were recorded.

The prison, with the support of PLIs, is proactive in supporting those prisoners with disabilities.

There are 90 prisoners who have previously been members of the Armed Forces. Pre-Covid, the Veterans (Vets) was a proactive group providing kindred support. Covid saw the break-up of this group.

The Veterans Support Group was re-established towards the end of the reporting year and is supported by a committee chaired by the Deputy Director. The committee meets monthly with the following objectives:

- reviewing and re-energising pre-existing support options
- exploring new opportunities and establishing new links with appropriate external organisations, charities etc.
- developing a calendar of events focused on Veterans
- creating an action plan to ensure tasks/developments are fairly distributed and have an appropriate owner
- improving governance, monitoring and data collection and management for Veterans in custody

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The Chaplaincy Team continues to provide first class support throughout the prison and particularly to the CSU, with most religious denominations represented. Bereavement and pastoral support are given to all denominations.

Oakwood Media provides access to faith services at different times with Christian worship primarily on Sundays and on Fridays for followers of Islam. During the week there are further services for other denominations, including Sikhism and Buddhism.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

A new incentive scheme was introduced in September 2022 with new criteria, entitlements, and rewards for each level. The levels are Bronze, Silver and Gold with an additional level, Platinum, for Lifers. There are detailed criteria for positive awards at all levels and a defined list of serious incident downgrades where the most serious would mean a demotion to Bronze.

Each prisoner has the opportunity to earn points by demonstrating positive behaviour, which accumulate and are available to be spent at the end of each



month. When 25 points have been accumulated, they can then be exchanged for a range of benefits including visits vouchers, pin phone credit and meals at kitchens.

There are three levels of negative warnings, which result in amounts of points being deducted.

During the September 22 to March 23 reporting period, a total of 2912 positives were awarded.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The total number of complaints received by the prison for the reporting year, excluding Practice Plus and DIRFs was 4460. However, 2325 complaints were deemed by the prison to be requests. The manager administering the system determines what constitutes a request, which is then dealt with by E1 managers either on the houseblocks or the kiosk.

The five top areas for complaints and details of the complaints upheld can be seen at Annex D.

Annex D also shows the top five locations against which a complaint was made but was, subsequently, deemed a request. The Board will monitor the submission of complaints which are subsequently deemed requests going forward as this is an area that confuses the prisoners, as they do not fully understand either the process or the rationale that is different in other prisons.

The quality of some of the responses to complaints is still a concern to the Board and will be monitored going forward.

## **5.8 Property**

The Board remains concerned regarding the levels of property that go missing following cell clearances. In response to concerns, detailed guidelines for cell searches and dealing with prisoners' property have recently been issued and the Board will monitor this going forward.

During the reporting year, property was the biggest cause for complaint via the prison complaints system with 127 complaints representing 17% of the total. There were 71 complaints relating to property going missing during transfer from another prison.

The Board regularly monitors the admissions process for new prisoners, including the reception of their property. On the whole the process, which is managed by existing prisoners, is handled in a conscientious manner.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Practice Plus Group (PPG) continues to provide a level of care equivalent to that provided in the community. Regular monthly local and regional Medicine Management Meetings continue to be held as well as Safer Prescribing Meetings.

Due to the size of the prison population, PPG do one big promotion every quarter in addition to circulating 'bite size' material monthly on different topics via Oakwood Media, in-cell packs and information leaflets given out by Health Champions. Healthcare representatives from HMPs Oakwood, Featherstone and Brinsford collaborated in remotely facilitating two face-to-face evening family engagement forums. The prison continues to have open communication with families who contact PPG with their concerns.

PPG's Patient Experience Lead (PEL) holds a monthly Concerns Clinic for prisoners with healthcare and prescribing concerns but who are not in the healthcare system. This provides the opportunity for the prisoners to discuss their concerns and the PEL to arrange appropriate appointments. The clinics are well attended with all concerns documented. The Board believes that the clinics have prevented an escalation of health-related complaints. The Board has appreciated the support of the PEL in assisting us in responding to health-related applications.

Following healthcare concerns from prisoners due for release, plans were put in place towards the end of the reporting period to provide a discharge lounge where prisoners can book in to see the clinical team prior to their release. See Section 7.5. This was a collaborative initiative supported by G4S and prisoners who helped create the lounge. It is expected that the discharge lounge will be fully operational in May 2023.

During the reporting year, there were 723 emergency escorts to A&E departments, 428 prisoners were awaiting specialist treatment and 194 requiring follow up. The Board is aware that a number of prisoners either refused to go to hospital or were not able to go due to lack of escort staff.

During the reporting year there have, at any one time, been up to five prisoners in hospital requiring 24-hour bed watches, with most requiring more than one officer in attendance. Such interventions, and their unpredictability, invariably have an effect on the operational staffing of the prison.

474 prisoners are currently in receipt of dental treatment with 248 on a dental waiting list as at the end of the reporting period. Of these, 87 prisoners are awaiting an initial appointment with 161 awaiting follow up.

In May 2022 an Internal Quality Assurance visit reported excellent feedback and following a Home Office Controlled Drug Licence Inspection at the end of the reporting year positive feedback was also reported.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

PPG has been proactive throughout the reporting period regarding health promotions and prevention.

A body mass index (BMI) club was set up in response to a survey that 76% of prisoners had gained weight during the Covid pandemic lockdown. Extra gym sessions supported by Health Champions encouraged prisoners to lose weight. Since July 2022, 52 prisoners have had a combined total weight loss of 83kg and a combined BMI loss of 36.2.

Similarly, a Diabetes Gym Club was formed to support prisoners in losing weight and make healthier choices. The Diabetes Gym Club is now used as a referral tool for all clinicians.

The Orchid Cancer Trust was invited to come in and train the 20 Health Champions on prostate cancer and how to signpost prisoners for follow up treatment.

The biggest High Intensity Test and Trace (HITT) programme ever done in the UK was introduced in the prison, supported by the Hep C Trust. 96% of the prison population was tested (believed to be the biggest HITT of its kind in Europe).

PPG hosted a health promotion event during Black History Month to address the difficult subject of the Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities' disengagement with services. 130 prisoners attended giving positive feedback, resulting in more prisoners coming forward. More frequent events are planned for 2023.

The promotion of World Oral Health Day saw an increase in patients visiting the dental team. The promotion of Sleep Awareness month saw the Health Champions give out handouts and in-cell packs covering sleep hygiene and facts around sleep.

Throughout the reporting year, PPG has striven to increase the number of health champions within the prison. There are 35 trained Health Champions based on every house block, driving the healthcare agenda. They have also had a positive impact on reducing the number of complaints, as has the Concerns Clinic.

### **6.3 Mental health**

Routine mental health referrals should be seen within five working days and urgent referrals within 48 hours. Urgent referrals are usually seen the same day. The time frames are challenging due to ongoing pressures on the service. On a number of occasions during the reporting year the number of referrals has exceeded over 100 a month.

There were 329 prisoners on psychosocial caseloads at the end of the reporting year. The Board is concerned that there has been a vacancy for a Psychologist for the duration of the reporting period.

All transfers to a secure mental health facility go over the 28-day stipulated timeframe. They are monitored on a weekly basis with a Regional Hospital Escalation Meeting and escalated fortnightly with Commissioners. The Mental Health Team remain concerned about the lack of availability of forensic, secure places which means prisoners remain in the CSU without the necessary mental health support.

Andy's Man Club was approached to set up a club in the prison with the objective of reaching out to those prisoners who do not access services, for whatever reasons, and 'fall under the radar' of the mental health team clinicians. The Oakwood Man's Club will continue to develop throughout 2023.

## **6.4 Social care**

Four patients were in receipt of social care packages during the reporting year. There was one allocated social worker at the end of the reporting period. All referrals were assessed and supported within the appropriate timeframe.

Towards the end of the reporting year plans were drawn up to create a therapeutic structure in a quiet location adjacent to healthcare to provide some peace and quiet when bereavement occurs. Feedback from prisoners highlighted that they cannot absorb this kind of information in a cell environment. The structure, which is planned for completion in the summer, would be used by the Chaplaincy Team for sensitive conversations.

There is a Supported Living wing on Ash for older and vulnerable prisoners who need a higher level of social care support. Much of this support is provided by their peers.

## **6.5 Time out of cell, regime**

The Director and SMT regularly review the regime and time out of cells to ensure that the wellbeing and social needs of the prisoners are accommodated. Where weekend and Bank Holiday regimes are affected by staffing constraints, all prisoners are notified of regime changes in advance.

This is an area that the Board will monitor further, including the weekend regime for time out of cell.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

A dedicated Drug Recovery Unit located on Elm supports prisoners who participate in a 16-week course. Throughout the reporting period 150 prisoners started the course compared with 138 for the previous year. During the year 40 prisoners were de-selected for reasons of security intelligence, violent behaviour or bullying.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

There were over 20 peer-led groups at the beginning of the reporting year, which were reviewed and rationalised. They were operating throughout the prison and contributed to the living experience of prisoners and assisting staff in providing support and advice. The peer-led groups provide a wide range of support for prisoners including Listeners, peer mentoring and support, mentoring those with challenging behaviour and building better relationships between prisoners and staff.

Those providing the peer-led support benefit from developing a range of life skills going forward - see Appendix B.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

#### **Education**

Novus Education is the contracted provider for education within the prison. In addition to basic courses in English and Maths (E1 – L2), they offer a range of courses across the house blocks from Art and Performing Arts to Business, Enterprise, and IT. There are 300 available places both morning and afternoon, which are all fully allocated.

L2 English and Mathematics are mandatory for those who have not reached this level under Director's Orders.

This year there were 133 prisoners on 165 Distance Learning courses (65 Open University, 41 Pocket Courses and 59 Prisoner Education Trust / Other).

The Board conducted an education survey which had a mixed response. The general feeling seemed to be that those who are on courses very much appreciate the work of the tutors, but it is difficult for those who are unable to gain a place. A sample of the responses:

- *It's easy to get involved in education. I do it for my future employment prospects. An in-cell laptop would help.*
- *I have always wanted to do a business course and I have managed to do it. The tutors are brilliant, very patient and understanding.*
- *There is a long waiting list, and it is difficult to get on courses.*
- *I do not like in-cell courses as you cannot get help when you need it.*
- *I have an action plan, but it has not helped me get the support I require.*

The Board, however, is still concerned about the quality and delivery of courses.

The Board would appreciate regular meetings with the Education Managers in order that it can then monitor more effectively. The Board's approaches to facilitate such meetings have not been successful.

#### **Library**

The library usage is improving but has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. For the majority of the past year the Library has been without a manager. However, in March 2023 two new managers were appointed (as a job share) and they are keen to re-invigorate the library.

New initiatives include Family Connections when they will liaise with visits and provide a framework of "conversation starters" for fathers with young children on visits. Other outreach ideas include a chess club.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

On Ash house block this year the following vocational qualifications have been offered: Forklift Trucks (72 learners); Barbering (24); Employability (250); ICT L1 (40); Horticulture (40) and Mindset (200).

Other courses provided by Novus across the house blocks include Barista training, Food Safety, Painting & Decorating, Scaffolding, and Practical Cleaning. Rail Track has re-started its course with an initial cohort of 12 prisoners.

An Automotive Maintenance course has been available for most of the year. It lasts for 10 weeks with successful candidates following the online test to achieve a Level 1 Diploma.

The needs of prisoners with neurodiverse conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are starting to be addressed. For example, a “Tea & Toast” session for prisoners on Ash allowing time for the instructors to be able to talk individually with prisoners in order to help them overcome their fears, was organised.

Industries has 250 available places in both Skills B and C workshops in the morning and afternoon. However, the Board is unable to provide further information, as details have not been made available.

Prisoners who work on packing and recycling commented that even though it was mundane and boring it is a stepping stone to a better job.

Farms and Gardens have managed to complete many of their plans over the past year. One large area of their land that was previously unusable, as it had very poor drainage, has now been redeveloped and contains over 100 new fruit trees and a picnic area for staff members to use.

They provide fruit such as strawberries, which prisoners can purchase and have also donated produce to a local charity.

They do provide food for the Kitchens but have been frustrated by the lack of creativity in using it to provide meals. They are planning to work with some of the cooks to help them create some more “interesting” menus.

## **7.3 Offender management, progression**

In September 2022 the Parliamentary Justice Committee published their report into the IPP sentence. Its recommendation for a re-sentencing exercise was rejected by the government.

Following an internal review of IPP prisoners by IMB Boards within the Yorkshire and Humber region, the Oakwood Board undertook a similar exercise to speak with IPP prisoners in the prison to get their understanding of the government’s rejection of the recommendation of a re-sentencing exercise.

The Board reviewed the details of IPP prisoners and subsequently spoke with each prisoner.

There were 52 IPP prisoners, 30 were visited by members, 16 had recently moved and six prisoners were not seen. A questionnaire was compiled but was used to shape the conversations members had with IPP prisoners rather than given out to be completed. The main findings were as follows: (See also Annex E)

- The majority were aware that an enquiry into sentencing was taking place and that the Government had rejected a full re-sentencing exercise.
- Their reactions to receiving the letter were overwhelmingly negative, ranging from ambivalence to anger, frustration, and despair.
- Most had low expectations of the outcome and do not expect their prospects for release as IPP prisoners to change as a result.
- The majority had not discussed the letter with anyone.
- Most were grateful that the IMB were taking an active interest in their situation.

The Board will continue to monitor the progression of IPP prisoners in the coming year by meeting them individually.

The prison offers the courses Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) and Building Better Relationships (BBR) with priority given to those who are in the final 12 months of their sentence or parole window. However, it still does not offer Horizon or Kaizen Treatment Programmes for men who commit sexual offences but does offer one-to-one work and can also arrange transfer to other prisons which do offer these programmes.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

The Board undertook a detailed analysis of social visits availability for the 6-week period from 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022 until 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022, investigating the percentage of visits booked, attended, and wasted on a daily and weekly basis. See Annex F.

The main points were:

- On average, 75% of available slots were booked, of which 76% were attended, which resulted in 42% being wasted.
- There is a greater proportion of appointments wasted on a Friday than on other days. Attendance levels are also lower on Fridays.
- The proportion of appointments booked is split into 3 sections: Mon/Tue/Wed which average 69%; Fri / Sat which average 77%; and Sunday which averages 87%.

The following were some of the support and activities available in Visits during the reporting year

- Kids Club – fully booked on both Saturdays and Sundays with many new families being able to experience them, including prisoners on Ash and Elm
- Jolly Tots – facilitated by the Help and Advice Line for Offenders' Wives) HALOW team (recognised at the National Family Learning Awards at the House of Lords in March 2023)

- parenting courses
- Strengthening Ties Engagement Project (STEP) visits each Monday for prisoners who receive limited or no social visits; these include breakfast, quizzes, and board games
- morning social visits on Mondays and Tuesdays, which can be doubled up for those whose families come from further away
- social video calls – each prisoner has at least one per month, but an extra session is offered as a Reading Club for children as well as to those who do not receive any social visits
- Lifer Family Day – this includes lunch, a quiz, and a bingo session

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

Around 120 men are released from Oakwood each month. Prisoners on the 12-week-to-discharge list are contacted with the offer of support and then those who have not been in touch at least 6 weeks before are followed up again. A typical month sees a quarter of those released going into employment.

The new Employability Hub began at the start of November 2022. It is supported by HMPPS through its Employers' Partnership venture, the New Futures Network. The aim is to bring all parts of Resettlement together to streamline a "one stop" support for prisoners wishing to find employment on release, with the focus being on helping with ID, banking and employability. It is also using "Inside Job", a peer-led employment consultancy working in a number of prisons, to offer help with disclosure letters and job applications.

The Employability Hub regularly holds Resettlement Fairs for prisoners approaching their release dates in order to promote the services and support available. Another similar initiative is run by members of the Resettlement Advice Line Peer Helpdesk (RALPH) PLI entitled "Through the Gate" and is delivered to small groups of prisoners from a specific house block.

RALPH also offer a variety of services dealing with finance, identification, and starting and ending tenancies, with a focus on new arrivals at Oakwood and those approaching release. They average 40 prisoner interactions a day, including by phone and face-to-face in debt clinics. For example, in October 2022 prisoners were helped with suspending debts totalling over £31,000.

Within the prison there is an affiliated PLI group called Version 1:1, which offers soon to be released prisoners help with IT (such as email and sim cards) and clothing essentials.

There is a Pre-Release team comprising three Probation Officers, and a Housing Welfare Officer employed by NACRO, which holds the contract.



## Section 8: The work of the IMB

The Board has undertaken the following work throughout the course of the reporting year:

- Members of the IMB contribute to the training of new PCOs to advise them of its monitoring role throughout the prison
- Participation in regional recruitment campaigns
- Production of detailed guidance notes for members, on all key areas of prison monitoring
- Led the regional work on the production of an induction folder for new members across the West Midlands region
- Began the development of the production of a series of short films for prisoners for Oakwood Media about the work of the Board
- Produced letters about the work of the Board for all prisoners, with targeted letters for new arrivals and those prisoners in the CSU
- Regular meeting with SMT and PPG

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	18
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9 with 1 in training
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10 (including 1 on sabbatical) and 2 in training
Total number of visits to the establishment	557

## Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	37	47
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	14	5
C	Equality	10	27
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	35	29
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	9	27
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	24	12
F	Food and kitchens	9	27
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	93	98
H1	Property within the establishment	26	56
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	65	71
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	8	12
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	56	76
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	38	88
K	Transfers	10	26
L	Miscellaneous	69	131
	Total number of applications	505	732

# Appendices

## Annex A

### List of Service Providers

- Practice Plus Group (healthcare provider replacing CARE UK from April 2019 including the provision of the pharmacy from 2021)
- GEO Amey (transport provider between prisons and the courts)
- DHL (ordering and delivery of canteen items)
- Aramark (catering services)
- Novus (education provider)
- Staffordshire Library Services
- Staffordshire County Council (social work and care support)
- Restart (social enterprise offering support)
- HALOW (family support service)
- NACRO (Resettlement services)

## **Annex B**

### **Peer Support**

HMP Oakwood is at the forefront of Peer Led Initiatives (PLIs) as a result of the support and confidence of the Director and his Senior Management Team

Prisoners are supported by other prisoners in two ways. The first is through PLIs and the other is through Peer Support Services (PSS). Peer to peer projects are an invaluable resource in a prison environment which houses some of the most vulnerable and challenging people. Each PLI and PSS has a member of the SMT who acts as its champion working with the project lead, to advise on job descriptions and expectations for the role.

The PLIs and PSS are expected to keep records of the work they undertake, and this is then shared with their respective champions. A representative from each PLI will also attend a monthly meeting with prison and third-party senior managers (Sapphire meeting).

Following a review during the last reporting year there are the following in place.

#### **Peer Led Initiatives**

These are unique projects that have been created from ideas by prisoners. PLIs developed from ideas that prisoners have taken to the Senior Management Team as ways they feel could help support aspects of prisoner life.

- Training Rehabilitation and Culture (T.R.C.)
- Behavioural Intervention Group (B.I.G.)
- Peace and Community Engagement (P.A.C.E.)
- Reintegration, Intervention, Safety and Engagement (R.I.S.E.)

#### **Peer Support Services**

These developed from prisoner-led projects. These include peer education and practical support mechanisms to help prisoners with everyday life.

- Leading Individuals Together (L.I.F.T.)
- Recovery Champions
- Drug Recovery Unit (D.R.U.)
- Health Champions
- Health and Safety Line (H.A.S.)
- Oakwood Media
- Project Unite
- Your Consultation Group (Y.C.G.)
- Prisoner OMU Pre-release Looking at Rehabilitation (P.O.P.L.A.R.)
- Resettlement Advice Line Peer Helpdesk (R.A.L.P.H.)
- Family Intervention Team (F.I.T.)

A booklet has been developed by the media team available to all prisoners to raise awareness about the role and function of each group.

## **Annex C**

### **Terms of Reference for the Violence Reduction Group (Stablisation Meetings)**

#### **Purpose**

To encourage strategic planning that will reduce the levels of violence and disorder by identifying trends and themes for the causes of violence and disorder within our establishments. It use data analysis and encourages communication between departments to discuss good practice, developmental needs and outline plans of actions to improve outcomes.

**Rehab Culture and awareness of differing needs.** This enables them to be aware of the different needs and effects on all Protected Characteristics groups.

#### **Objective**

To provide a safe and controlled prison environment for staff and prisoners, where prisoners feel supported and able to focus on addressing offending behaviour and future planning, without the fear for their safety and whereby staff feel they can impact on the reduction of risk associated behaviours in a safe and effective manner.

#### **Aims**

To reduce both violence and disorder within our establishments and uphold levels of decency through positive staff-prisoner interactions; ensuring procedures are fair and just; addressing disproportionality and maintaining a safe and rehabilitative environment.

#### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Frequency** - Weekly

**Day and Time** – Tuesday of the relevant weeks 13:30

**Duration** - 1 hour

**Minutes** - Safer Custody Administrators

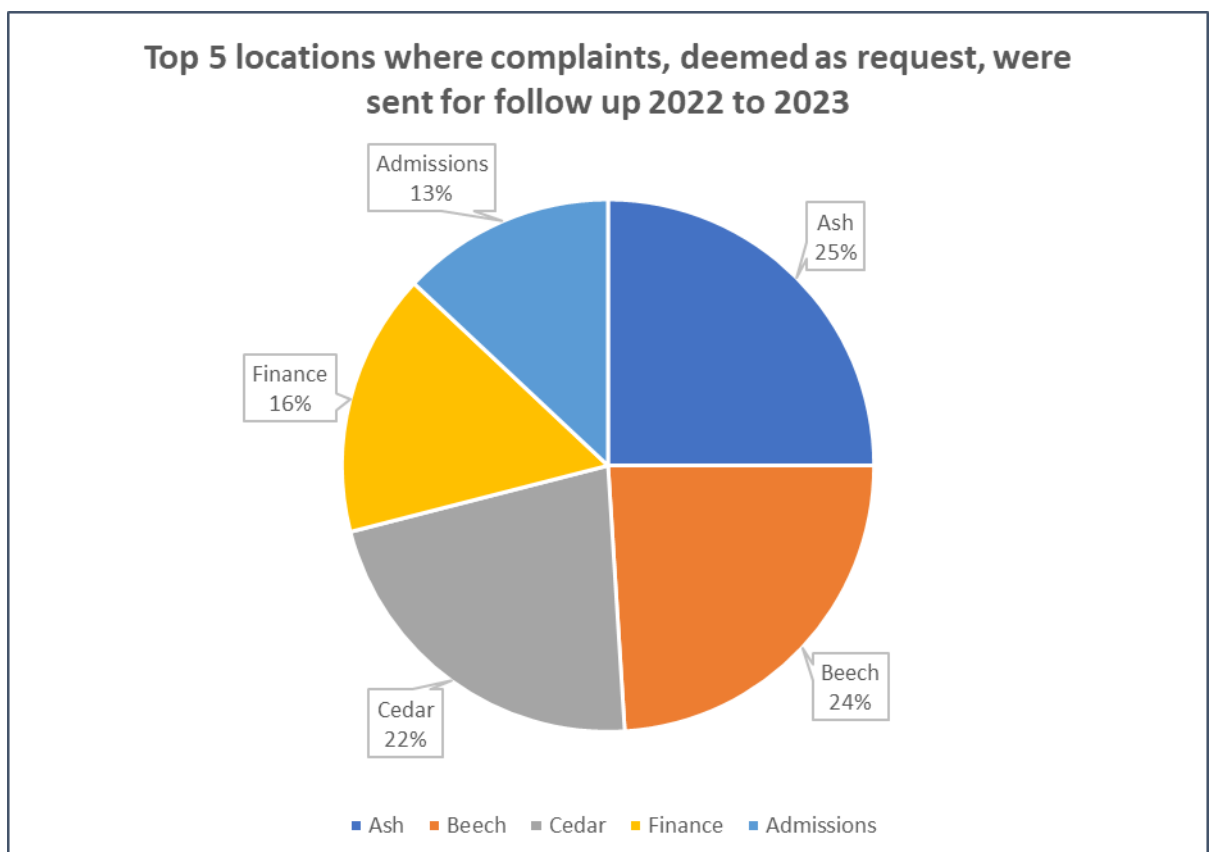
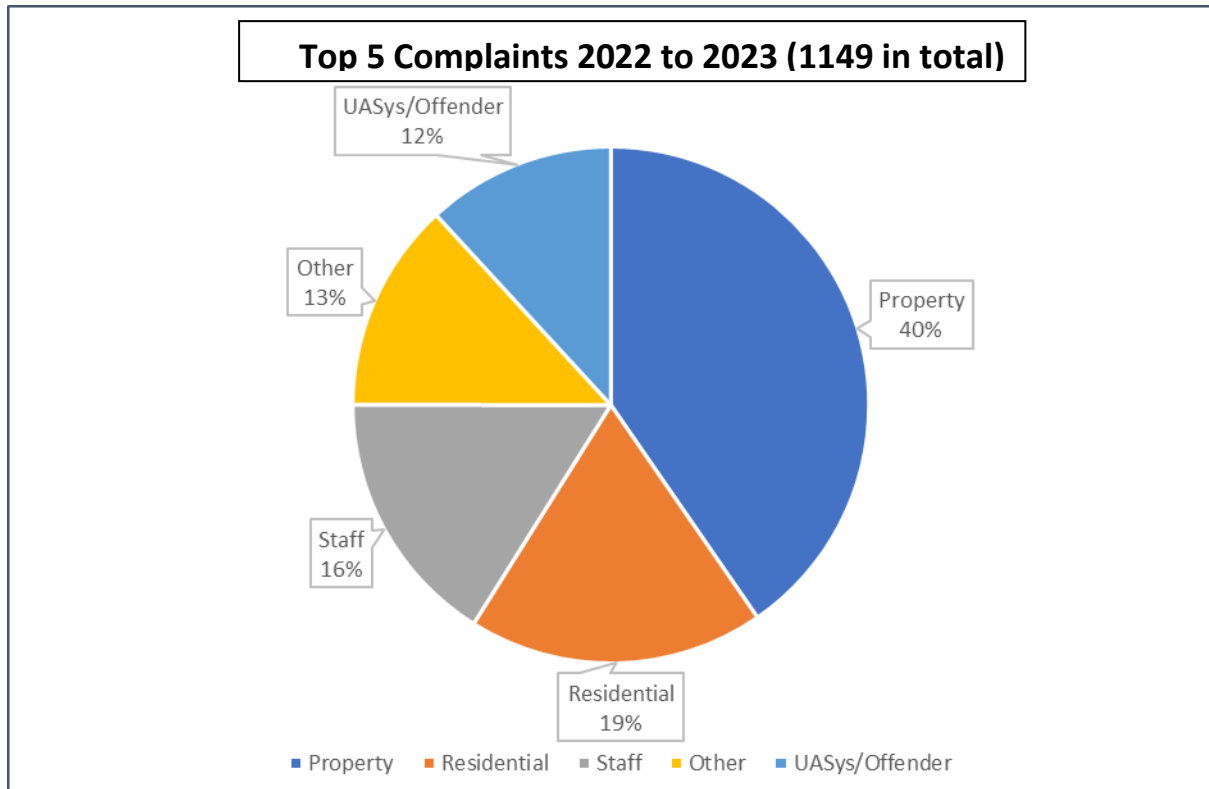
**Venue** - The Boardroom

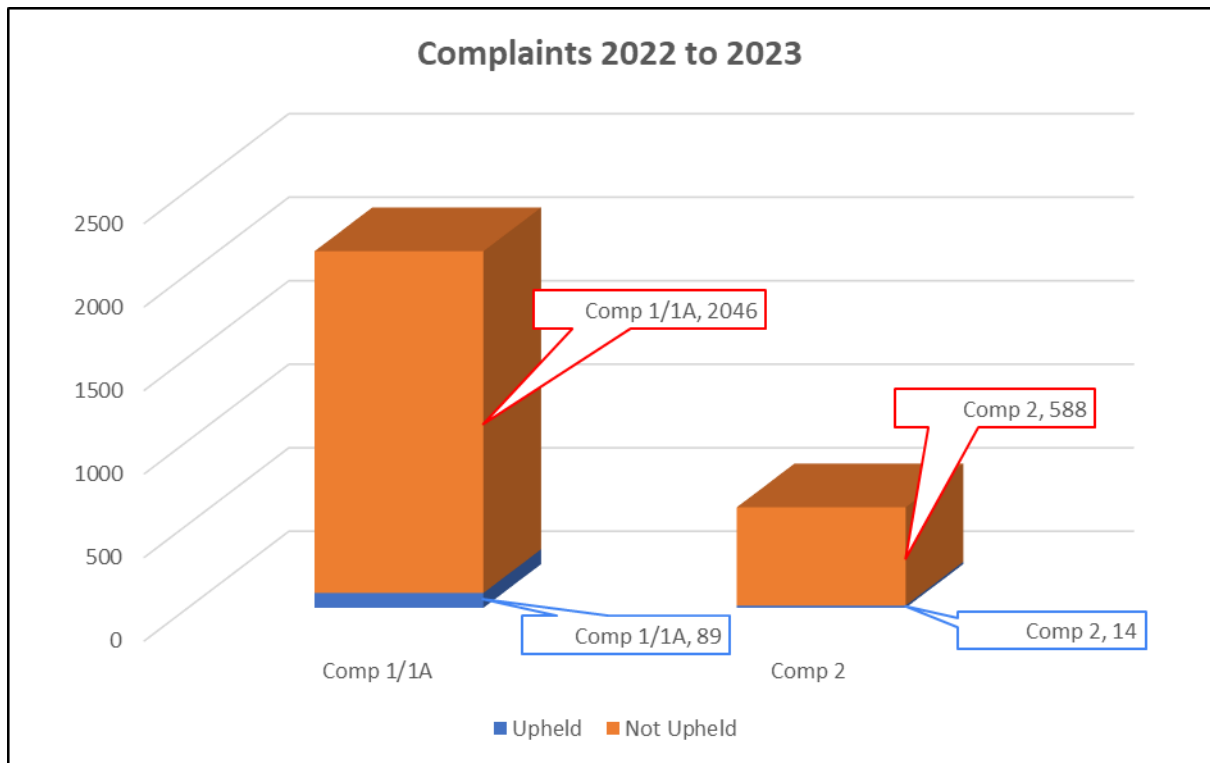
#### **CORE MEMBERSHIP**

- Deputy Director & Head of Safety – Chair
  - Head of Residence
  - Head of Security
  - E1 Managers from Each Main Residential Area
  - Intel Security Manager
  - Safer Custody - Violence Reduction Manager
  - Security Analyst
  - Mental Health Team Representative
- IMB invited to attend

## Annex D

### Complaints data





## Annex E

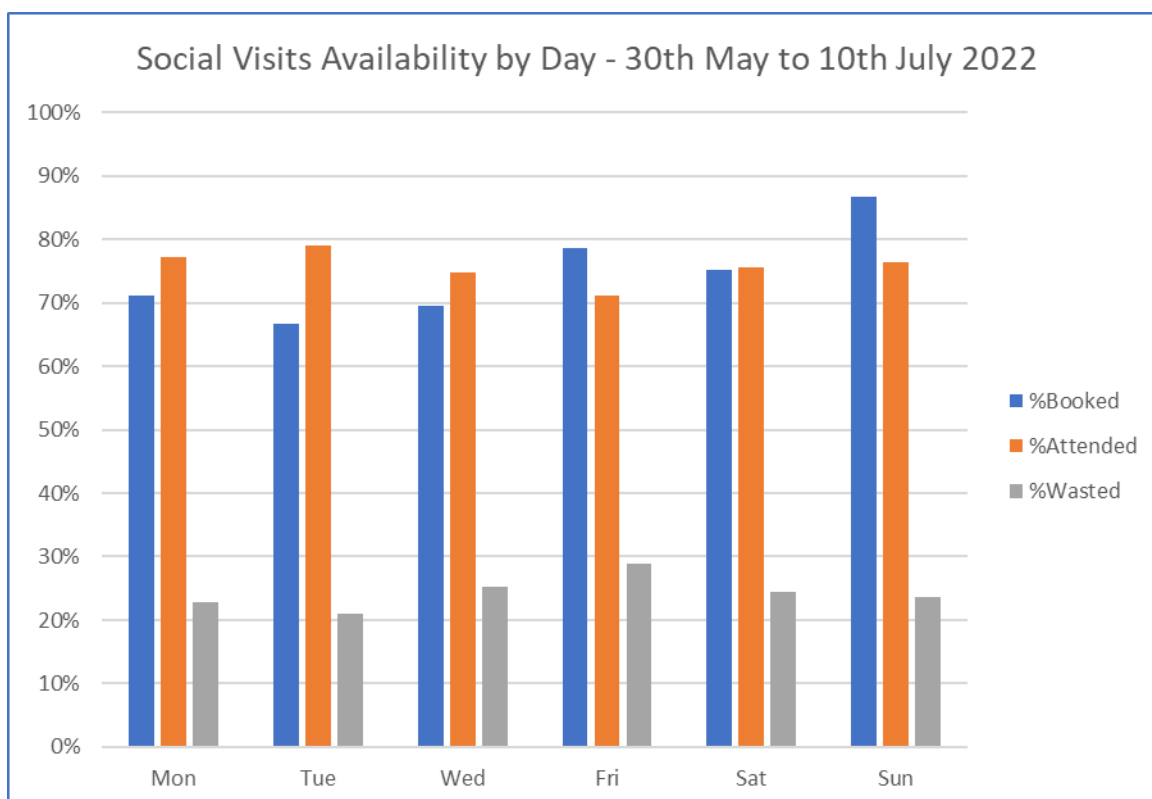
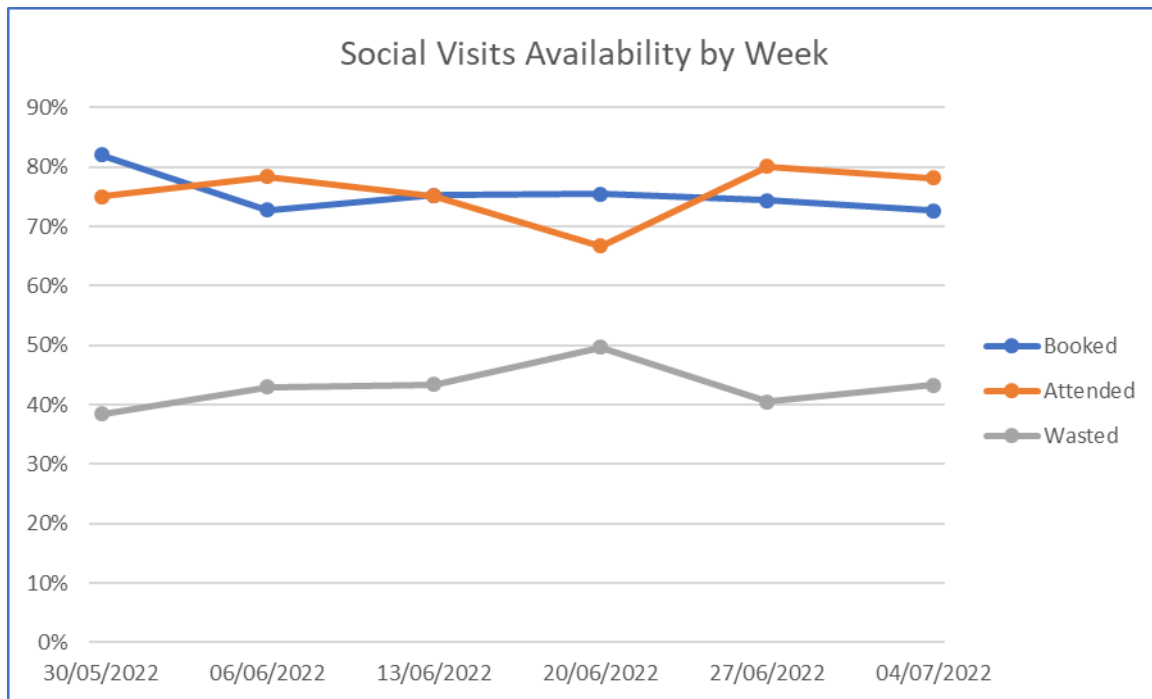
### IPP Prisoner information and survey results

Tariff-expired unreleased IPP prisoner population by original tariff length and time over tariff												
Time over tariff	NATIONAL March 2023											
	Original Tariff length											
	Less than 2 years	%	2 years to less than or equal to 4 years	%	Greater than 4 years to less than or equal to 6 years	%	Greater than 6 years to less than or equal to 10 years	%	Greater than 10 years	%	Total	%
Less than 1 year	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	3	1.2%	14	50.0%	18	1.4%
From 1 year to less than 2 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	2.4%	5	17.9%	11	0.8%
From 2 years to less than 3 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	21	8.4%	7	25.0%	29	2.2%
From 3 years to less than 4 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	39	15.6%	1	3.6%	41	3.1%
From 4 years to less than 5 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	3.9%	59	23.6%	0	0.0%	70	5.3%
From 5 years to less than 6 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	28	10.0%	40	16.0%	0	0.0%	68	5.1%
From 6 years to less than 7 years	0	0.0%	6	1.1%	45	16.1%	32	12.8%	1	3.6%	84	6.3%
From 7 years to less than 8 years	0	0.0%	43	7.8%	40	14.3%	19	7.6%	0	0.0%	102	7.7%
From 8 years to less than 9 years	8	3.7%	60	10.8%	29	10.4%	14	5.6%	0	0.0%	111	8.4%
From 9 years to less than 10 years	19	8.8%	82	14.8%	39	13.9%	12	4.8%	0	0.0%	152	11.5%
10 years or more	189	87.5%	362	65.5%	85	30.4%	5	2.0%	0	0.0%	641	48.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Time over tariff	HMP OAKWOOD February 2023											
	Original Tariff length											
	Less than 2 years	%	2 years to less than or equal to 4 years	%	Greater than 4 years to less than or equal to 6 years	%	Greater than 6 years to less than or equal to 10 years	%	Greater than 10 years	%	Total	%
Less than 1 year		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	50.0%	2	4.1%
From 1 year to less than 2 years		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%
From 2 years to less than 3 years		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%
From 3 years to less than 4 years		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	14.3%		0.0%	1	2.0%
From 4 years to less than 5 years		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%
From 5 years to less than 6 years		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%
From 6 years to less than 7 years		0.0%		0.0%	1	14.3%	3	42.9%		0.0%	4	8.2%
From 7 years to less than 8 years		0.0%	3	13.6%	1	14.3%	2	28.6%		0.0%	6	12.2%
From 8 years to less than 9 years		0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	50.0%	2	4.1%
From 9 years to less than 10 years		0.0%	4	18.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	4	8.2%
10 years or more	9	100.0%	15	68.2%	5	71.4%	1	14.3%		0.0%	30	61.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Annex F

### Visits analysis



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