



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Five Wells

**For reporting year
1 February 2022 – 31 March 2023**

Published September 2023



Contents

Introductory sections 1 - 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	3
3. Key points	5
Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	8
5. Fair and humane treatment	10
6. Health and wellbeing	13
7. Progression and resettlement	15
The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	21
Applications to the IMB	21
Annex A	
List of service providers	22

All IMB annual reports are published on www.imb.org.uk

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 Five Wells is a newly designed and built Category C prison in Wellingborough, which can house 1680 prisoners with the aim of providing rehabilitation and resettlement for prisoners with up to two years left on their sentence.¹ It opened in February 2022 and is managed by the G4S group. The ramp up of prisoner transfers has been slower than planned because of staff recruitment difficulties in some areas, workshops not being properly equipped and the draft of prisoners containing a significant number not ready for the stated regime. At the end of March 2023 there were 1200 prisoners and all but one houseblock was in operation.

Accommodation is provided in seven house blocks with four discrete floors accommodating 60 prisoners, the majority of whom have single cell accommodation

¹ 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.

with in-cell showers. Accessible cells are also provided on each wing. There is in-cell telephony, an electronic kiosk on each wing and by early 2023 prisoners were provided with electronic tablets.

The prison's stated aims were to make extensive use of Prisoner Led Initiatives (PLIs) to deliver programs, support prisoners and work with staff to provide opportunities not experienced elsewhere. It was to provide a 35-hour working week as preparation for future employment, with visions of providing up to 150 Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) placements.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- The Board is concerned about the number and range of illicit items found in the prison. Drugs seem to be available on most houseblocks.
- A high proportion of operational staff have less than one year's service and staff shortages mean they have little support.
- The introduction in January of the two integrated wings (which house both general population prisoners and prisoners convicted of sexual offences [PCOSOs]) was handled well.

Fair and humane treatment

- Overall the standard of wing accommodation is good. Most prisoners have single cells with showers. Tables and seating on the wings encourage socialisation.
- There are a number of design faults, eg, low mobility cells on each wing cannot be occupied for safety reasons, air flow on the landings is poor and the original gym location was unsuitable.
- The application of the incentives scheme has been inconsistent, with enforcement dependent on the confidence and knowledge of staff on duty.
- The Board received many complaints from prisoners about the quality, quantity, and range of choices for food. There have been instances when the Board has observed food shortages and occasionally some prisoners going without meals.
- The canteen system, serviced by DHL, has been a major cause for concern, including the standard and shortage of items, and delays in prisoners receiving refunds.
- There has been inconsistent management of the segregation unit, with a regime which did not clearly distinguish between rights and privileges. Damage to cells in the unit resulted in one third being out of action at the end of the year.
- There is little evidence of key worker support, and the roll-out is behind schedule.

Health and wellbeing

- The health needs of prisoners are generally being met, within the constraints of shortages of permanent clinical staff.
- Only one of the two medication hatches has been commissioned on each houseblock, leading to delays of up to two hours and regime disruption.
- Wheelchairs are not always available, and no maintenance system for the wheelchairs is in place.
- There are limited appropriate activities for older prisoners.

Progression and resettlement

Education, library and vocational training

- Education provision had a slow start due to difficulties in recruiting tutors and a lengthy clearance process. Some vocational workshops were not equipped, and some had insufficient power supply.
- The allocation procedure has been problematic, and prisoners were not always allocated an appropriate course in line with their resettlement plan. A recent survey indicates 23% of prisoners did not choose the course they are on.
- Attendance in vocational workshops and education averaged at 56%, partly due to inconsistencies in penalising non-attendance.
- The Head of Education has raised serious concerns about the safety of staff in his department.
- Vocational training provision is behind schedule which has limited work opportunities for prisoners.

Offender management, progression, family contact, resettlement planning

- The plans and resources available for resettlement are good but not yet fully implemented.
- Original and revised Key Working targets have not been met.
- ROTL has been suspended. However, there has been good engagement with local businesses resulting in approximately 20 companies offering around 500 employment opportunities for prisoners approved for ROTL.
- Intervention programmes have not been delivered as anticipated.
- Support for families, and particularly for men with children, is good. All men have a tablet and can send and receive texts to and from approved numbers.
- Numerical ratings given by visitors in respect of their overall visits experience are almost all positive and have an average score of 8.4/10.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

What plans are there to ensure that design omissions in this new design prison are addressed in future builds?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Staffing, equipment, and facilities were not all in place when the prison opened, and discrepancies remain. How can this situation be avoided in the future?

The Board is concerned that many prisoners were transferred to Five Wells with the promise of an experience that was not available on arrival. This caused problems for prisoners and staff and affected their progression. What steps can be taken to prevent this happening in the future?

A significant number of prisoners transferred to Five Wells were not suitable for what the prison had to offer. What steps can be taken to minimise this practice?

Key work support has been eroded by staffing shortages and operational requirements. What steps are being taken to ensure prisoners get the support they need?

Loss of property (particularly for inter-prison transfers) is problematic and creates anxiety for prisoners and extra work for staff. What immediate steps are being taken to address this?

TO THE DIRECTOR

What steps are being taken to ensure a good standard of food is available for prisoners, and food safety requirements are met?

How will the prison improve the canteen system? The Board considers the distribution and processing of missing items and refund process unworkable, time consuming and not fit for purpose.

What action can be taken to address concerns about the Prisoner Led Initiative (PLI) activities? The Board considers that whilst much of the work has had a positive impact, there are serious concerns (expressed by both prisoners and staff) about the methods of recruitment, selection, management, and supervision of some individuals.

The Board's rota reports have highlighted that inconsistencies and frequent changes in regime have undermined the running of the houseblocks, with some staff feeling unsupported and lacking the confidence to enforce where necessary. What action will be taken to remedy this?

What steps are being taken to ensure the consistent application, management, and review of the incentives scheme?

What steps are being taken to ensure that prisoners attend their allocated purposeful activity and, if returned, or refusing to attend, that there is consistency in the action taken?

What security measures are being implemented to limit the number of illicit items found on the premises?

What steps are being taken to safely reinstate the ROTL programme?

3.3 Response to last report - this is the first report for Five Wells prison.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The prison opened in February 2022. Difficulties in establishing the regime, the number of inexperienced staff and some inappropriate transfers (e.g. a prisoner requiring constant watch) contributed to intermittent admission. Admissions reached 1200 by March 2023. Prisoner feedback from the reception process has been generally positive, aside from property issues.

Prisoner induction processes, now lasting 2 weeks, developed as the prison became more established. Peer Led Initiative (PLI) banded prisoners play a major role in induction delivery. Prisoners also have input from prison functions. Some prisoners have commented that the volume of information leads to confusion.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Open assessment, care in custody treatment plans (ACCTs) are in place for approximately 2.5% of the population. Information was not available on the total number of ACCTs opened during the reporting period. The Board has concerns about the completion of paperwork on ACCT documents.

Self-harm incidents as a percentage of the population showed a marked increase during the year, with incidents exceeding 60 – 70 per month in the last quarter. Self-harm was more prevalent in certain wings, including the care and separation unit (CSU). The vulnerable prisoner (VP) wing has a lower incidence of self-harm, violence, and drug misuse.

Two deaths in custody occurred. While no inquest has yet been held, the Board understands they were not self-inflicted. The apparent causes of death were natural causes.

The safeguarding process has been streamlined (for example improving collaboration with Healthcare) to offer greater support to those who feel under threat or have mental health issues. Management information on safeguarding shows that the most common concerns are prisoners under threat, mental health, and bullying.

The recruitment and training of Listeners was delayed, but in the final quarter the scheme was established, and a rota of Listeners was in place.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The number of violent incidents, as a percentage of the population, increased during the last 6 months of the reporting period. Education staff expressed concern that the number of operational staff in their area is minimal, making it less likely that disruptive behaviour is challenged.

The introduction in January of the two integrated wings (which house both general population prisoners and PCOSOs) was handled well. The IMB has received positive comments from prisoners on the wing, with few concerns expressed. The PLI

initiative SPEEC (Social Prescribing and Empowerment to Encourage Change) ran integrated events before the opening, to help prisoners get to know each other.

The increase in recorded Challenge, Support and Intervention plans (CSIPs), a scheme used to manage and support prisoners at risk of being violent, is partly due to the fact that staff were unable to access the prison recording system (NOMIS) in the early stages.

Initially the most concentrated area for violence was the CSU. Inconsistent application of the regime appeared to contribute to both the rise in self-harm and disruptive behaviour which led to a third of the cells being out of operation.

The Board considers the CSU review system was often poorly coordinated and inefficient, leading to wasted time and delays in decision making. The Board was not always informed about reviews (although this improved in the last quarter). Reviews, and therefore decision making, were delayed and Healthcare were not always represented. The application of the incentives scheme has also been inconsistent, with enforcement dependent on the confidence of the staff on duty.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force (UoF) incidents increased as the prison population increased, averaging more than 50 per month in the last quarter of the year. The processes of using body worn cameras and of debriefing have been a positive contribution to on-going training. The IMB has attended UoF meetings, which include a discussion on both good practice and areas for improvement.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The Board is concerned about the number and range of illicit items found in the prison. Drugs appear to be available on most houseblocks, were at one point offered to prisoners in the CSU by a banded prisoner and have become more common on the drug recovery unit (DRU). Increases in total finds have broadly matched the increase in prison population. Finds include hooch, drugs, cell phones and SIM cards. Drone sightings were initially common but additional security measures have reduced the incidences. The prison has, however, curtailed some outdoor activities in response to an increase in throwovers.

Staff searches were reported as exceeding 1,000 instances in September and October (target 300). Most searches are between 6am and 8.30am (when staff arrive) but do not appear to take place at other times during the day.

The programme of random drug testing (on 5% of the population) produced around 25% positive indicators. There have been relatively small numbers of risk or suspicion-based tests, with a positive rate well below the random rate of 25%.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Overall, the standard of wing accommodation is good. Most prisoners have single cells with showers. Tables and seating on the wings encourage socialisation. Maintenance issues are promptly attended to with critical issues made safe within 2 hours. There are, however, some design faults which have not been rectified:

- Airflow on the landings is poor, creating significant discomfort in the warmer months.
- The low mobility cells on each wing cannot be occupied for safety reasons (the electric sockets are too close to the shower).
- The original location of the gym was unsuitable. The current location (a converted workshop) can only accommodate 30 prisoners per session.

The daily budget for prisoners' food is £2.63. With current food price inflation procuring supplies has proved challenging. Prisoners with sufficient funds can order their own food through the canteen and cook it using the microwaves and toasters which are available on wings.

The Board monitors serveries each week and receives many complaints from prisoners about the quality, quantity, and range of choices for food. The Board has observed occasions when insufficient food has been delivered to the serveries. Staff endeavour to obtain more food, but occasionally some prisoners go without a meal. Officers rarely challenge serveries workers for failing to wear protective clothing. HMPPS undertook a Food Safety Management Assessment in March, and several concerns were raised.

Initially there was confusion and inconsistent application of what property a prisoner could have in their cells which resulted in prisoner frustration. For example, some prisoners were allowed speakers with high output causing excessive noise which staff were reluctant to challenge.

The canteen system (provided by DHL) has been a major cause for concern, because of both the standard and constant shortage of items. The refund system is impractical and unworkable taking up to 7 weeks to reimburse prisoners.

The Board regularly sees prisoners vaping in areas outside their cells, which staff fail to challenge. Staff are also seen vaping in unauthorised areas.

5.2 Segregation

Inconsistent management of the unit, and a regime which did not clearly distinguish between rights and privileges, resulted in some unrest. Damage to cells led to some cells being out of action at the end of the year. Parts of the unit need to be refurbished with more suitable equipment.

Timings of reviews were inconsistent, and consequently start times were delayed (IMB members often waited more than one hour) and key staff did not attend. A change of management in the unit and a more consistent approach to the regime

saw improvements in the last quarter with a safer and more settled environment. Issues remain over the completion of paperwork on ACCT documents.

The prison could not provide information for this report about the number of prisoners held for over 42 days.

A significant incident arose when it was found that PLI prisoners attending the unit to support prisoners were the supply line for drugs.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

A major concern is the number of inexperienced operational staff in the prison. Prisoners have complained to the Board about lack of support from officers and some houseblock managers, staffing changes, and inconsistent knowledge and application of rules. The Board has observed reluctance by wing staff to challenge prisoners (e.g. when prisoners walk into the staff office, or when they are vaping in unauthorised areas).

The prison's stated aims were to make extensive use of Prisoner Led Initiatives (PLIs) to deliver programs, support prisoners and work with staff to provide opportunities not experienced elsewhere. A number of initiatives were successfully established, including the prisoner-led induction programme, the 'Cordial' friendship group which provides support to prisoners who have little or no contact with family or friends, and HAS line (see Health and Wellbeing section). Whilst recognising the success of the initiative, the Board has concerns about the methods of recruitment, selection, management, and supervision of some of the enhanced prisoners working on the scheme.

The keyworker roll-out is behind schedule (see Section 7).

5.4 Equality and diversity

Diversity and Inclusion meetings are held monthly and are attended by members of the senior management team.

A total of 131 discrimination incident report form (DIRF) applications were received by the prison. These included: Religion (54), Race (27), and Disability (12).

DIRF boxes on each wing were not provided when the prison was first opened and whilst these are now in place they are not yet secured with padlocks.

There have been several Diversity Events including Alfie Best attending for Travellers and Frank Bruno attending for Mental Health.

Accessible toilets are provided throughout the prison including in all workshops. Lifts are also available.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Overall, the Chaplaincy Team appear to carry out their duties well. The Head Chaplain left the prison after less than 6 months, but the position was filled promptly.

Difficulty in recruiting a Roman Catholic Chaplain has meant some restriction of services. Muslim and Sikh prayers and other Christian services are held regularly. Issues remain with recruiting a Pagan Chaplain.

5.6 Incentives schemes

The prison operates four levels: reintegration (basic), standard, enhanced, and super enhanced. Arrivals are automatically given enhanced status, regardless of their status from a previous establishment. There is one super enhanced wing which offers certain privileges (e.g. a salad bar at meal times and more time out of cell).

The Board has received several verbal and written complaints about the inconsistent application of incentives schemes, for example, being placed on basic without a review.

5.7 Complaints

The prison received a total of 3086 complaints in the reporting year. Areas receiving the most complaints were canteen, property, and finance. Seventy percent were handled within time.

5.8 Property

Changes in the prison's policy regarding clothing and property rules, and inconsistencies in application of the rules, has caused confusion and resulted in many complaints from prisoners. Forty IMB applications were received about property within the establishment and a further 43 concerned property from sending prisons.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The NHS commissioned Practice Plus Group delivers the healthcare provision. It was well-established from day one and the initial intake benefited from quick access to appointments. By the end of the year there were around 15 clinical staff vacancies (mainly nursing and pharmacy staff) and wait times (which are published on the Healthcare front desk) had increased to approximately:

Dentistry: 4 – 5 weeks.

Opticians: 2 – 3 weeks.

Physiotherapy: 5 – 6 weeks.

Screening programmes include: blood born virus on arrival, diabetic eye screening, and NHS bowel screening. Covid-19 cases were well managed.

A regular PPG newsletter informs prisoners of health promotion activities (such as diabetes and alcohol awareness), explains terminology on an appointment slip and gives the names of healthcare champions on each wing. PPG have meetings with the Prison Council which ensures prisoners' voices are heard. There is a confidential system for submitting complaints, and prisoners are informed how to escalate complaints to NHS England.

The PLI HAS line (Health Advisory Service) works well. It has representatives on each wing who provide information and support to prisoners, including reminders about appointments and chasing up non-attendance. Non-attendance is low (around 10%). Health Champions check weight and blood pressure if this has been requested by a nurse.

There are two medication hatches on each houseblock, but only one has been commissioned. There are insufficient clinical staff to run two hatches. Medication hatches were initially on Level 3 but one was moved to Level 1 to make access easier for prisoners with mobility issues. Long wait times of up to 2 hours, which can disrupt the regime, are common. PPG is working with the prison to reduce wait times.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Clinics include: GP, nurse practitioner, dentist, optician, podiatrist (infrequent provision – a new podiatrist will be appointed) and physiotherapy. There is capacity for 4 to 5 outpatient appointments each day, plus any emergency appointments (the availability of hospital escorts limit numbers). PPG are working with the prison to try to increase outpatient appointments. There has been a small number of 'failed discharges' from hospital. As a result, PPG is planning to ensure hospitals are better informed about the prison healthcare provision. PPG provide 24-hour cover, with a nurse and healthcare assistant on duty during the night.

6.3 Mental health

Staffing includes 1 psychologist, 3 assistant psychologists, a psychiatrist and mental health nurses. There is a referral system (both self and staff). Referrals are categorised and urgent cases seen within 48 hours, non-urgent within five days. Group therapy sessions were introduced towards the end of the year (initially there was a problem with the availability of rooms for the group sessions).

The Board has observed that healthcare staff attendance at ACCT reviews has been inconsistent. PPG are working with the prison to rectify this.

Two prisoners were transferred to a secure mental health hospital. There were no delays, and one transfer was achieved within a week.

6.4 Social care

There were delays in signing off the social care contract with the Local Authority, but by the end of the year it was in place. PPG employ Healthcare Assistants who provide personal care, and the Local Authority's Occupational Therapist (OT) visits to assess prisoner needs. Wheelchairs, which should be provided by the Local Authority, were not always available for prisoners with poor mobility, and a system of maintenance for the wheelchairs is not in place. PPG, however, purchased 4 wheelchairs for use on the vulnerable prisoners' wing. On the VP wing the Board has observed good interaction and support by social care buddies.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Time out of cell is good – Monday to Thursday 9.5 hours and Friday – Sunday 7 hours. It has sometimes been affected by staff shortages.

There is good access to the gym and the Board has observed outside exercise on the Astro turf pitches. There are cardio exercise rooms on each wing, including the CSU. On the closed drug recovery unit (DRU) wing exercise classes are held on the landing. There are limited appropriate exercise opportunities for older prisoners. The popular weekend perimeter walk was cancelled for reasons of security and was not replaced by an alternative activity. The Board is disappointed that prisoners have not been allowed (for security reasons) to use the garden area, which is accessible from the vulnerable prisoner (VP) wing.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The DRU opened in September and at the end of the year it occupied two landings. Overall, feedback from prisoners on the unit is positive.

There have, however, been a number of drug finds and positive drug tests on the unit.

6.7 Soft skills

PLI groups provide a range of support, including a friendship group for prisoners who have little or no contact with family or friends. There are few social activities for older prisoners, and many spend hours on their wing with little to occupy their time.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education: The provision had a slow start due to difficulties in recruiting tutors, and a lengthy clearance process. The Head of Education, who has experience of working in prisons, and a Librarian, were not appointed until half-way through the year. The national management information system 'Curious' came on-line towards the end of 2022, making it easier to track and record learner progress.

By the end of the year good provision was in place, including: Maths, English, ICT, Art, Business Studies, Accounting, Teacher Training and Safety in Construction (although this is coming to an end, as the course has ceased nationally). All courses are accredited through NCFE or City & Guilds. Fifty-eight prisoners were accessing Open University courses. The provision for prisoners with learning difficulties is now progressing.

The Shannon Trust has trained 9 mentors, who provide one to one support and outreach. A mentor from the Traveller community was trained to support engagement with those prisoners from the Traveller community, but he then left the prison. Another is being sought.

Initially, attendance in classes and vocational workshops was poor. IMB monitoring noted attendance as low as 25%. This has improved, but averaged at 56%, owing partly to inconsistencies in penalising non-attendance. The success rate for those attending is 92%. Certificates are presented to prisoners and achievement recorded. It is intended to hold achievement awards in the very near future.

The allocation procedure has been problematic, and prisoners were not always allocated an appropriate course in line with their resettlement plan. A recent survey indicates 23% of students did not choose the course they are on.

The Head of Education raised serious concerns about staff safety. Education staff do not always have the confidence to challenge disruptive behaviour, such as vaping, and there is a perceived lack of support from prison staff. They have, however, recently been issued with personal alarms and 5 radios and there are plans for staff to attend personal protection training.

Library: There were delays in obtaining a good stock of library books. At the end of the year a trolley was obtained which takes books to the CSU. There are bookshelves on each wing, stocked with donated books (but prisoners complain that books are infrequently refreshed). The library now offers 5 reading groups and a chess club once a week. The footfall per month for the library has risen from 300 visits in October to over 600 in March.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Initially there were delays in fitting out workshops and with the recruitment of vocational tutors. At the end of the year more than 20 workshops were running including: printing, barbers, bike repairs, training kitchen, upcycling, ceramics, fork-lift truck training, electrical maintenance, a call centre, Salvation Army recycling, and

carpentry. The prison grounds are maintained by the gardening team. Some vocational qualifications are in place, including the accredited personal training course run by Northampton Saints Rugby Club.

The training kitchen is working with “CLINK” for accreditation and one prisoner has commenced the course. The tutor has started a recruitment campaign. A plumbing tutor has just been appointed and is currently waiting for the room to be fitted.

It is too early to comment whether the vocational training helps prisoners obtain employment on release. There have been complaints, however, from prisoners who consider their work allocation to be unsuitable. IMB monitoring identified that this often resulted in non-attendance or poor attitudes to work. The Board was given to understand, as were prisoners originally placed at Five Wells, that there would be an opportunity for work allocation to match their resettlement plans and the working week would be 35 hours. The lack of appropriately qualified staff, and workshops not being equipped, meant that this was not fulfilled in the first year of operation.

It is noted that, despite all the initial problems with recruitment and setting up workshops, there has been a vast improvement during the year.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The progression plans of prisoners have not yet been achieved, influenced by the following issues:

- Approximately 60% of men arrived without a sentence plan, or a plan not delivered. The OMU staffing level has almost reached full complement and the team has worked well to address this and as at the end of March there were 66 men awaiting sentence plans, which represents less than 6%.
- Original and revised Key working targets have not been met. Key working began in June but by the end of September the sessions delivered had not exceeded 29% of the target. The target was then reduced and changed for sessions to only be delivered to men assessed as in priority need (on an ACCT, or with an ACCT in its post closure phase, CSIP, young offender, or otherwise vulnerable). Subsequently an average of approximately 63% of the revised target sessions has been delivered. By the end of March all Prison Custody Officers (PCOs) had been trained in key working and were being supported by key worker champions, but only 23 PCOs were engaged as key workers, working with 140 men. Approximately one third of reports do not meet quality assurance checks and relevant feedback is given.
- ROTL has been suspended. The original plan was that when fully operational there would be at least 60 men approved and working each day on ROTL. During the year 4 men were approved for ROTL and in July there were 67 instances of ROTL. For a short period, ROTL had very successfully begun. During a temporary suspension of work deployment, pending finalisation of payment arrangements, 3 men attempted to bring drugs into the prison and all ROTL was subsequently suspended. Due to population pressures, there has been an influx of prisoners into the establishment that are classed as high or

very high risk of serious harm and as such they are excluded from having ROTL while in closed conditions. High risk currently accounts for 56% of the population which also includes a number of licence recalls.

- Intervention programmes have not been delivered as originally anticipated. Staffing capacity to deliver offending behaviour programmes is good, but while the original programme plan was for delivery of three accredited programmes, only the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) has been delivered. This was completed by 43 out of the 50 men who started the programme, exceeding the original target of 30. COVAID (Control of Violence for Angry Impulsive Drinkers) was seen as a suitable potential replacement for 2 of the accredited courses but has not been commissioned. Approximately 20 non-accredited programmes/courses were also identified as able to contribute to addressing the areas of substance misuse, resettlement, and families. As of the end of March, of these, three have been delivered: Understanding Mindset to 174 men, The Lost Soldier for armed forces veterans to all 26 eligible men, and Foundations of Rehabilitation (see 7.5).

All men arriving at Five Wells are category C. By the end of March, 1388 category reviews had been made resulting in transfer to appropriate prisons:

- Poor behaviour led to 8 prisoners having their security level raised to B and transferred to category B prisons.
- Two hundred and fifty three men were recategorised to category D (open conditions), of which less than 15 were returned to closed conditions for failures in category D.

At the end of March there were 33 prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence who will have any reduction in security level decided via the parole board.

There were 25 parole hearings held either in person or via video link, which resulted in 5 prisoners being granted release.

7.4 Family contact

Support for families and particularly for men with children is good. A dedicated unit for 60 prisoners has been created for men who are motivated to maintain family ties and meet specific eligibility criteria.

During the year, up to around 50% of men who had been placed on the unit to meet prison accommodation pressures, did not meet the eligibility criteria, and did not appropriately engage. Consequently, they were later removed as opportunity allowed. By the end of March the unit was comprised of only eligible men and is supported by a team of three, known as 'Invisible Walls', and includes a full time family intervention worker, located close to the unit.

During the year, 24 family days were held for eligible men from the family unit, and other family men with an enhanced status. Entitlement for family days is 1 visit every 3 months. In addition, other family days were held for various celebratory events. Other engagement events included:

- games night – 6 families attended
- under 21s – 4 families attended
- Dads and Tots (0-2 years) intervention to develop a bond between carers and children - 2 families attended for 4 sessions
- Language and Play (pre-school children) to develop a bond through learning – 5 families attended for 6 sessions

Appreciative comments for these events included:

- 'feel more free and relaxed compared to usual social visit'
- 'amazing session, good engagement, dads and children'

In addition to the above, 260 'family lounge' visits were held during the year for men from the family unit or of 'super-enhanced' status. These allow men to meet with their children in dedicated private areas. With only three exceptions, the behavioural expectations of all participants were met. The opportunities for meeting in this environment are valued by prisoners and their families.

Other family services provided include:

- arrangements for men to have a first visit to see a new-born baby
- arrangements via social services for men to see children in care
- free legal advice and support in family court matters

The introduction of a scheme called 'Story Book Dads' is in discussion but is not yet available. This scheme allows prisoners to record bedtime stories for their children onto disk, allowing children to play the recording whenever needed.

All men have a tablet and can send and receive texts to and from approved numbers.

Email a prisoner was successfully trialled and will be implemented in May.

The visits hall is suitable for purpose and has a capacity for 35 men to have a maximum of 3 adult visitors and unlimited children. A relatively small integrated children's play area is equipped with books and toys, but there are plans to rearrange and provide a larger space for children. Social visits are normally available each day except Friday providing a total of 13 sessions each week. Daytime visits are of 2 hours' duration and evening visits of 1 hour. At the weekend all available places are frequently taken and on weekdays around 75% of capacity is utilised.

Social video calls are also available. Four terminals are available for 6 sessions per day Monday to Thursday and 4 sessions per day Friday to Sunday. These are well used.

Requests for social visits can be made by the prisoner and requests for social video calls can be made either by the prisoner or visitor.

During the year there was a limited provision of refreshments during visits, but this has now been extended to include a wider range, including some hot food.

The charity HALOW supports families by greeting and checking visitors and provides support to them as needed in the visits' hall. Children's activities are age related and based around a topical theme. With almost no exception comments are positive specifically in relation to the support for children e.g., 'absolutely smashing for families, really friendly staff go above and beyond, children are relaxed and happy, brilliant lots of choice'.

Numerical ratings given by visitors in respect of their overall visits experience are almost all positive and have an average score of 8.4/10 specifically in respect of the three categories of staff, the waiting area facilities, and the visits hall. For example: 'Have visited many prisons over the years and the whole culture here is a wonderful reflection of humanity. A Shining Light!'

7.5 Resettlement planning

The plans and resources available for resettlement are good but not yet fully implemented. Initially, however, there was no identified space to deliver programmes.

The phases and resources available include:

- WRAP (Wellingborough Resettlement Advice Programme) which provides peer support at induction for early identification of potential resettlement issues, and to provide ongoing support. A summary of resettlement needs identified at induction shows that over 80% of arriving prisoners indicate they will require at least some assistance with resettlement.
- Resettlement specific courses:
 1. 'Foundations of Rehabilitation' typically intended for men in their last 6 months prior to release or to assist their applications for D Cat or Parole. CGL (Change Grow Live) delivered 24 five-day courses to 210 prisoners. The course offers a holistic approach to rehabilitation focusing on self-esteem by providing motivational strategies, exploring, and building on strengths.
 2. 'Resettlement and Re-entry' focuses on personal, social and employment skills, including CV writing courses and has been delivered to 87 prisoners.
- A Discharge Board meets fortnightly to address relevant issues such as accommodation, health, and benefits. The IMB has observed a discharge board meeting which was seen to discuss and ensure relevant needs of men were being addressed.
- Twelve weeks prior to release the arrangements for any necessary support on release are begun. The Probation Service assess prisoners 12 weeks prior to release to consider all resettlement needs, including accommodation, ID and banking, and if necessary, make a formal 'duty to refer request' to the relevant local authority for potentially homeless men. In addition, 'Reconnect' identifies and supports men with health care needs and arranges support for their ongoing needs post release.
- CRS (Commissioned Rehabilitative Services) providers, together with relevant prison and community offender managers, make an action plan for those men

without accommodation on release. At least 8 weeks prior to release, a trial operates whereby men are seen 3 weeks prior to release by prison based DWP staff who arrange advanced payment of universal credit on the day of release for those men identified as in need.

- 'Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire' has a dedicated worker providing support and a resettlement pathway to men before and after release. A specific example of this is their close working with a PLI group SPEEC (Social Prescribing Engagement and Change). Examples of activities so far include:
 - a 3 day 'Inspirational Voices' event involving 350 men.
 - a 5-day event for 15 men featuring 'Good Vibrations' using percussion instruments.
 - weekly tabletop games for up to 15 men who don't get visits.
 - engagement day for 50 men who don't get visits, with the aim of enabling prisoners to form positive relationships with community volunteers.
- There has been very good engagement with local businesses resulting in approximately 20 companies offering around 500 employment opportunities for prisoners when they have been approved for ROTL.
- An Employment advisory Board has recently been established, chaired by a local businesswoman. This now meets bi-monthly and is supported by a prison employment lead. In February, an Employment Fair was held with good engagement from 11 relevant local potential employers and attended by a total of 60 men over 2 sessions during the day.

By the end of November 2022 only 34 men had been released and all had accommodation. In the following months, until the end of March, between 86% and 90% of the 93 men released had accommodation and approximately 30% were released unemployed.

8. The work of the IMB

Despite active recruitment, Board member numbers are well below complement. As the prison roll has increased, so too has the demand on Board members' time.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the establishment	396

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions		13
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions		9
C	Equality		0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell		10
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions		23
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends		21
F	Food and kitchens		12
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care		18
H1	Property within the establishment		40
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility		43
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues		23
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation		22
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying		15
K	Transfers		3
L	Miscellaneous		45
	Total number of applications		297

Annex A

List of service providers

Aramark: prison food contract.

Change Grow Live: health and social care charity delivering life skills courses.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP): assistance with financial needs, debt issues and setting up benefit payments ready for release.

HALOW: a charity which provides visitor centre services.

Ingeus: employment services.

Interventions Alliance: offer support in securing accommodation ready for release.

Nacro: provide personal wellbeing services after release.

New Futures Network: a specialist part of HMPPS which offers assistance with identification and banking.

North Northamptonshire Council

Practice Plus Group Ltd: NHS-commissioned healthcare provider.

Probation Service

Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire: a local charity which provides programmes aimed at improving prisoners' health and wellbeing.

Weston College: education and skills provider.



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

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

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

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