



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Styal

**For reporting year
1 May 2022 – 30 April 2023**

Published September 2023



Contents

Introductory sections 1 - 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	4
3. Key points	6
Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	12
5. Fair and humane treatment	15
6. Health and wellbeing	19
7. Progression and resettlement	22
The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	25
Applications to the IMB	25
Annex A	
List of courses at Styal	26

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/YOI Styal is the only female prison in the North West and when fully operational holds up to 486¹ female prisoners, aged 18 years and over, who may be on remand, immigration detention or serving sentences ranging from five days to life. As a local prison, it receives prisoners directly from court and has a large catchment area covering the North West and North Wales.

HMP/YOI Styal has a complex population of offenders consisting of short sentence (60%), and long-term prisoners (40%), including lifers. It also has a significant number of prisoners who have been recalled, many of whom have issues with substance misuse and mental health.

The prison consists of 17 standalone houses accommodating approximately 20 prisoners in each, including a community house (Bollinwood), situated outside the fence, for up to 25 prisoners categorised as suitable to live in open conditions; a drug recovery house which is the first in the women's estate; a mother and baby unit (MBU), which accommodates up to nine prisoners and 10 babies; and a further house which has been adapted to accommodate prisoners with disabilities.

The prison also has a cellblock (Waite Wing) used for remand, detoxing and prisoners with discipline issues. New prisoners are now located in the Induction Centre (IC) on Waite wing. There is a ten-bed Care and Separation Unit (CSU) used to house some prisoners with poor behaviour, as well as those in temporary cellular confinement, and occasionally for their own protection. The Valentina unit (a time out, short stay facility) accommodates up to ten prisoners in single rooms.

Spectrum Community Health (Spectrum), a community interest company, continues to have the contract for primary healthcare, drug and alcohol reduction (DARS) and social care. Mental health care is provided by Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Trust (GMMH). Spectrum also provides substance misuse treatment.

The prison education framework provider is Novus. Courses include numeracy, literacy and Information Technology. GeoAmey holds the contract for works within the prison and for escort services.

Community Resettlement Services [CRS] providers are: PSS (Women's turnaround) – Merseyside, Cheshire, North Wales; Tomorrow's Women – Wirral; Ingeus Justice – Greater Manchester; Lancashire Women – Lancashire; and Women's Community Matters – Cumbria.

Phoenix Futures held the family services contract until October 2022 when the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) took over. From the 1st April 2022, the Mother and Baby Unit has been run by Action for Children.

The establishment has a number of workshops on site with opportunities for training and rehabilitation into a working life in the community. These include laundry, DIY,

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

catering, and gardens. Outside agencies operate Recycling Lives and the Clink restaurant and both of these have provided job opportunities for prisoners on release.

The prison has seen another change in leadership with the Governing Governor leaving post at the start of 2023, replaced by an experienced temporary Governor from January to date. The Standards Coaching Team has also been in place for 16 weeks during this reporting period.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- The Board believes that the prison has a committed, multidisciplinary and thoughtful approach to safety. This is demonstrated through strong leadership, effective analysis of data, extensive knowledge of prisoner needs and a high level of care and compassion. However this approach has been compromised throughout the year by staffing shortages, the inexperience of some new recruits and the inconsistency of the regime as the prison has moved into the post pandemic period.
- In both prisoner on prisoner assaults, and prisoner on staff assaults, Styal has the highest rates in the female estate. The prison also recorded the third highest level of self-harm in the women's estate. The Board attributes much of this increase to the lack of a predictable regime, which has had a disproportionate effect on the most complex prisoners.
- The Board has raised concerns about some individuals who are sent to prison. The prison has seen considerable increases in the numbers of individuals sent to Styal as a place of safety, to manage their mental health support needs or manage their risk to self. Between May and July 2022, 13 individuals were sent by the courts on warrants of concern, and they were responsible for a disproportionate number of incidents in the prison.

Fair and humane treatment

- The Board observed positive relationships and work between staff and prisoners. However, the key work system was not working as planned, largely because of the pressures on staff.
- The quality of accommodation in the houses remains a key concern for the Board, as reported on many previous occasions. There are ongoing maintenance issues; heating levels are inappropriate, particularly in the MBU and those rooms occupied by menopausal prisoners. To keep these buildings safe, decent, and fit for purpose there are major expensive maintenance and structural issues that still need to be urgently addressed. The response from Amey is often reactive, costly and slow.
- The Board have observed the segregation unit to provide a fair and safe regime, where staff remain helpful and maintain a respectful and humane regime often in the face of difficult circumstances such as the occasional 'dirty' protest. Prisoners are consistently given a 'bespoke' opportunity to re-establish occupancy within the rest of the prison.

Health and wellbeing

- The inability to consistently provide safe and timely administration of medicine remains a concern and prisoners' ability to access health services, including time in the fresh air, has been negatively affected by shortages of both prison and healthcare staff.

- The Board believe that pregnant women and mothers and babies are well cared for by the peri-natal team. The provider continued to meet the increased demand for Social Care, especially for women with learning difficulties/disabilities. The drug and alcohol reduction service (DARS) continued to meet the needs of women on arrival, during their sentence and on release.
- The Board have observed the prison to have taken a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to the care of women with severe & enduring mental ill health; they try to secure the best possible outcome for each individual woman.

Progression and resettlement

- Employment on release figures as a percentage can be misleading, due to the relatively high number of releases each month at Styal versus other female estate prisons. The figure of 7.59% year to date employment at six weeks post release time point is in line with expectations. For the past year Styal has recorded the highest number of employment outcomes numerically across all of the women's estate.
- The Library service did not consistently meet minimum statutory access requirements for all prisoners.
- Access to activities (education and employment) was negatively affected by lack of staffing, with issues only starting to resolve in the last quarter of year.
- The development of the "Departure Lounge" outside the gate, providing access to agencies, suitable clothing, advice, phones and medications has made the process of leaving the prison far more civilised, and reduced much of the stress for those leaving the prison.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- What financial support can be given for pre-release planning for remand prisoners? Currently in Styal, basic services are provided but there is no funding for these, nor is there funding for the level of service available to sentenced prisoners.
- The prison continues to be challenged by the need to manage many prisoners with severe and enduring mental health problems and complex needs. Nationally, there is still a pressing need for more specialist facilities that can be easily accessed, particularly psychiatric units. When will the findings made by the National Women's Prisons Health and Social Care Review be available?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- What are the long-term strategies for prisoner categorisation for the planned new Open facilities at Styal and the impact of national population management processes?
- Accommodation remains a key issue in the prison, with particular regard to decency, disability and dignity, given the limited access to bathrooms and toilets, and the ongoing maintenance issues in the 17 residential houses.

What consideration has been given to the option of competitive tendering for large scale maintenance and refurbishment projects to enable a more timely solution to these concerns?

- The Board continues to have concerns around the safe and timely administration and dispensing of medication. What will be done to address the inadequate accommodation for the pharmacy service including the way in which medicines, including methadone, are transported?
- Reduced staffing levels have had a significant impact on the operational activities in the prison, impacting on safety and mental health. The prison staffing budget, with an ineffective rate of 20%, appears insufficient to cover all duties. Will there be any review of staffing budgets in the coming year?
- What further support can be provided so that the important activity of key work is delivered consistently and to a high standard for all prisoners, even with the current staffing levels?
- Staff shortages have impacted on women's access to healthcare and hospital visits, especially the need for escorts to enable access to internal and external appointments. This is particularly critical given the different demands in the female estate for gynaecological services, paediatric care, and pre-and post-natal treatment. What additional support can be provided to female prisons to help them meet this demand?
- Access to suitable prison issue clothing for female prisoners remains a key concern for the board. Whilst the Board welcomed the planned introduction of female specific clothing in January 2023 this has not yet been fully implemented. When will this be rolled out to all female prisons?
- The Board has noticed a growing issue for prisoners with regard to the cost of living, and the reduction of available items for purchase through the canteen system. Prices of essential goods have risen in line with those in the community, yet there has not been a corresponding increase in wages and allowances within the prison. Will there be any additional budgetary support so that the prison can increase wages in line with inflationary pressures?
- What steps are being taken to ensure that vacancies in the pre-release team, which are significantly restricting the service to prisoners being released, are filled as a priority?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- What actions are being taken to increase numbers of work releases on temporary licence (ROTLs) for prisoners at Styal, in the short term, and in terms of planning for the future expansion of 50 open spaces in 2024?
- How is the prison addressing the reduced number of programmes which support prisoners to understand and modify their behaviour?
- What plans are in place to increase the availability of high-quality key work sessions for eligible prisoners?
- What provision is in place to improve library access to ensure minimum mandatory requirements?

- The timely administration of medicines and the inadequate dispensing facilities remain a significant concern – how will this be addressed in the future?

3.3 Response to last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
TO THE MINISTER		
1. Concerns with fire safety.	1. Fire detection system to be installed by Feb 23, Fire Safety Improvement [FSI] work on 75 sets of fire doors completed.	
2. Concerns with overcrowding of bedrooms and decency in the houses.	2. Refurbishment programme for all houses; expansion plans for more modern accommodation for 76 prisoners.	2. Refurbishment – a recent IMB survey indicates no substantial improvement in suitable/humane conditions.
3. Concerns with staffing levels.	3/4. Pay rises, fast track scheme, bespoke training schemes for officers in the women's estate, mentoring and buddy schemes.	3. Staffing - cited activities have been slow to generate increase in staff numbers and the majority of this reporting year has seen all activities badly impacted by low staffing levels.
4. Impact of staffing on escorts for external healthcare.		
5. Concerns with return to normal regime and potential increase in drugs and illicit substances due to staffing.	5. Not able to use body scanners and X rays on female prisoners but risk being further explored.	
TO THE PRISON SERVICE		
1. Concerns with lack of availability of community mental health beds meaning some prisoners spend considerable time on CSU.	1. NHS/HMPPS joint review in 2021 to report on pathway for women prisoners and the provision of specialised units.	1. Female Offender Strategy - the implementation plan was published on the 31 January 2023.
2. Concerns with the change in contract for Through The Gate services.	2. Committed to resettlement of female prisoners; Female Offender Strategy Plan to set out plans.	
3. Concerns with lack of suitable clothing for women, transgender and non-binary prisoners.	3. Production of female garments to begin in January 2023; swap shops have available items for transgender prisoners.	3. Clothing – the lack of female and transgender clothing has continued to be an issue.
TO THE GOVERNOR		
1. The Board will continue to monitor the use of laptops within the prison.	1. Ongoing monitoring by prison and IMB.	1. Prisoner laptops – some success noted but no online access to IMB applications and healthcare complaints processes still an area of

<p>2. Concerns with prisoners' access to the library.</p> <p>3. Concerns with procedural changes to clothing parcels meaning some prisoners are unable to receive suitable clothing.</p> <p>4. Concern with lack of continuity with regards to ROTL, especially for prisoners living in Bollinwood House.</p> <p>5. Concern over timely administration of medication and suitable dispensing facilities.</p> <p>6. Concern over clarity and fairness of the incentives system.</p>	<p>2. Access to the library affected by staffing.</p> <p>3. All prisoners can now receive one clothing parcel per year on their birthday.</p> <p>4. Bollinwood monitored more regularly by prison staff.</p> <p>5. Ongoing.</p> <p>6. Incentives system reviewed.</p>	<p>concern.</p> <p>2. Library – access a concern and does not meet mandatory requirements.</p> <p>3. Clothing parcels – one parcel per year now allowed.</p> <p>5. Medication – still a major cause of concern.</p> <p>6. Incentives – system revised, regular reviews now in place but still concerns about the benefits of enhanced status for some residents, particularly those in Bollinwood.</p>
--	---	--

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

A new induction process has been in place for most of the year, and it provides a much improved transition into prison life. All the relevant checks, processes and assessments were in place, and the Board saw a high level of professionalism and care from staff and peer supporters.

Reception is much more welcoming and provides a more supportive environment, with healthcare staff in attendance, and far greater care is taken to identify underlying mental health and medication issues. However, the prison often receives prisoners late in the evening, some of whom arrive without appropriate paperwork which impacts on the ease of their transfer, and their initial access to services and advice.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Increasingly there have been concerns at HMP/YOI Styal about some individuals who are sent to prison. It is clearly evidenced from published research that prison is a risk factor for any individual in respect of their mental health and risk to self. Sending individuals to prison who are already mentally unwell or considered a risk to themselves is likely to only increase their risks.

A number of prisoners have been identified as mentally unwell or a significant risk to themselves, to the point of likely needing a secure mental health placement to address their support needs. It has been incredibly difficult securing the appropriate mental health assessments and placements needed for these individuals. The Board have observed prison has worked hard to find ways to best support and manage them, but it is clearly not resourced to provide the level of mental health support needed.

Between May and July 2022 a total of 13 prisoners fitting these categories were in custody at Styal and were responsible for 365 incidents of self-harm, 26 staff assaults, 4 incidents at height, 3 cell fires, 15 damaged cells and a hostage incident. The impact on resources, staff and other prisoners is hugely disproportionate and drains attention and time from those others in need of care.

ACCT numbers have remained relatively stable over the year, with a slight increase over the year from a daily average of 29 in May 2022 to 34 in April 2023.

Self-harm incidents peaked in August 2022 and December 2022 but have been in gradual decline since then. The majority of self-harm continues to be from a small number of prisoners; in April 2023 there were 279 acts of self-harm, and 242 of these were carried out by 12 prolific self-harmers. The main type of self-harm is non-weight bearing ligature. One of the primary triggers identified by the prison is the lack of a predictable regime, which has impacted significantly on the most complex prisoners including neurodiverse prisoners.

The Board has recognised a growing proportion of self-harm incidents emanating from the 18-24 age group. The Young Adults Project has continued throughout the

year and is intended to reduce violence within this cohort, through increased offers of education, activity and accredited schemes.

There is peer support through the Listeners scheme for all prisoners, and the Early Days programme identifies those most vulnerable to self-harm on entry to the prison. This programme provides intense psychological support and strategies to reduce self-harm and is able to demonstrate clear success rates with its cohort. The Stepping Stones programme also continues to provide therapeutic support for other vulnerable women, with a range of art, music, meditation and reflection programmes. However this programme has been affected by staffing shortages and regime restrictions over the year.

The Valentina unit, which offers short-term respite care for vulnerable prisoners continued to provide excellent care. The unit has been refurbished and redecorated and had a committed and professional team of staff who understood the complex needs of the prisoners and consistently responded with patience, good humour, and understanding. Worryingly, a recent staff skills audit showed a lack of mental health training including autism awareness.

The Board notes with sadness that there were 2 deaths in custody during this reporting year, one of which was self-inflicted, and the other in hospital. To date there have been no PPO reports, and the Board remains concerned about the delays in inquests from previous deaths.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Prisoner on prisoner assaults peaked in September 2022 and again in January 2022, but are at the same level now as in May 2022. Prisoner on staff assaults had a similar pattern, peaking in July 2022 and now showing at October 22 levels. Key triggers are linked to regime restrictions and lack of purposeful activity as a result of staffing shortages.

Offence related violence in particular remains a key area of focus for the prison, and a poster campaign and training programme are seeking to improve recognition, and promote a more consistent approach to staff responses and the application of sanctions.

4.4 Use of force

A weekly meeting was established during the year to scrutinise Use of Force in the prison, following on from the introduction of body worn cameras (BWC). This scrutiny has identified issues around the wrong use of holds, inaccurate paperwork and an inconsistent use of BWCs. However many of these issues have been addressed through training and awareness raising and de-escalation techniques were being used more regularly as a consequence.

The data indicates that Styal has the highest level of Use of Force in the women's estate and that the number of incidents has increased from 55 in May 2022 to 71 in April 2023. As with self-harm, the majority of incidents involve a small number of prisoners who have to be repeatedly restrained as a result of their behaviour and non-compliance.

It is still a concern that at the start of some unplanned incidents staff were not turning on their cameras and there was no record of the build up to the incident. PAVA incapacitant spray was not used in this reporting year.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Ongoing issues with illicit substances in the prison remain a concern, despite the improved security measures introduced during the year. The medication queues are not always adequately supervised and this sometimes leads to trade in prescription drugs. Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) has been haphazard over the year, and this has also impacted on the circulation of illicit substances, and the associated bullying and coercion that sits alongside.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The Board notes that the houses are now fully compliant with fire safety regulations. Since the interim governor came into post in January 2023 there has been investment and encouraging changes made to some accommodation and infrastructure. However the quality of accommodation continues to be a key issue for the Board, as reported on numerous occasions. Ongoing maintenance issues include the installation of new windows, areas of internal damp and mould to attend to, replacement of inefficient heating systems and repair to a large crack in the external brickwork of one house. General regular maintenance programmes, such as gutter cleaning, are also lacking within the prison, which has undoubtedly contributed to the poor state of repair of the houses.

A recent survey during January 2023 which was carried out by the Board as part of a thematic exercise looking at accommodation, highlighted a number of issues on the houses, one of which included how the houses have on average a low ratio of 3 toilets and 3 bathrooms, with up to 20 occupants. This lack of decency remains a cause of concern for the Board, especially following the high cost refurbishment of Bronte house, which when completed, failed to increase the number of toilets and bathrooms.

There were a total of 141 bedrooms across the houses, comprising of 40 single occupancy rooms; 52 double occupancy rooms; 31 x 3 bed dorms; 16 x 4 bed dorms and 1 x 5 bed dorm. For those residents who had to share, the rooms we viewed seemed cramped with reports of broken and missing furniture, bedsheets used as curtains and concerns about people going into other people's rooms and stealing things. There was also insufficient furniture in the communal areas for seating and for dining.

The prison has taken some remedial actions to improve the conditions but it is unable to provide additional toilet and bathroom facilities. It was noted that overall, prisoners made the best of what was provided to them with some of the houses working together as a community more than others. Whilst the Board still has concerns over the lack of facilities for the number of people residing in each house, it does leave a question: were the prisoners just accepting what was unacceptable?

There have been significant improvements to the Wing block, particularly the Induction Unit with new flooring, decorating, and a confidential privacy booth for use by prisoners. The MBU has also been redecorated and refurbished and a brand new outside play area installed for the children. The Board feels that these are very positive changes and those made in the mother and baby unit will help to promote mother and baby bonding, as well as enhance child development.

The new gatehouse is now fully commissioned, and this development has made accessing and exiting the prison more organised and secure. Plans were also submitted for additional accommodation, including 2 new open houses, and a new closed block.

The Board has not received any adverse applications about catering this year. The Board notes that despite budgetary constraints the kitchen has made every effort to vary menus, provide for special dietary needs and offer meals that complement any festivals. The kitchen staff in particular have made very effective use of the laptops to keep prisoners informed and to deal directly with dietary concerns.

The Board remains concerned about access to clothing particularly for new prisoners in reception. The Board is aware that there is often a shortage of basic clothing such as underwear, nightwear, footwear, coats, and clothing in general for female prisoners. There is a limited range of sizes, especially in the provision of underwear.

5.2 Segregation

Only three prisoners have spent more than 42 continuous days on the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) and the 10-bed unit is rarely more than half full. An analysis of the available data from the Segregation, Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) clearly shows the unit being used sparingly and proportionately with average days per prisoner in single figures.

Assaults on either fellow prisoners or staff remain the main reason for occupation in the unit and figures show use of force is minimal. There are few formal complaints from inmates with one prisoner accounting for the majority.

IMB attendance at CSU reviews has been sporadic due to an inconsistency in review timings, though regular monitoring of the unit's documents show the staff are conscious of the importance of prisoner management and rehabilitation. Significantly, some attended reviews and adjudications have been identified as exemplary by our members.

Concerns remain over some prisoners who are contained simply because of their mental health difficulties and the lack of alternative accommodation outside the prison continues to be a problem.

Recent decorating has taken place and a series of managers have expressed the need to make the unit seem less severe. Some plans to improve facilities have been thwarted by at least one prisoner who damages cells at a prolific level. Nevertheless, there are moves to provide a new recreation room and improve the outlook from the cells.

The Board has observed that staff remain helpful and maintain a respectful and humane regime often in the face of difficult circumstances such as the occasional 'dirty' protest. Prisoners are consistently given a 'bespoke' opportunity to re-establish occupancy within the rest of the prison.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

Relationships between staff and prisoners generally remain positive and there have been many occasions when Board members have witnessed a large degree of professionalism and compassion despite difficult challenges and behaviour.

Key work is not carried out systematically and the Board wonders if the 45 minute per week sessions are actually a realistic target given the current staffing issues in

the prison. A total of 1330 key work sessions have been carried out over the past 12 months, which was still significantly below the number necessary to ensure that every prisoner with a keyworker was seen on a weekly basis.

The use of laptops in the prison has been a successful initiative, and has provided prisoners with a degree of control and independence over canteen, finances, complaints, menus and appointments. This increased independence has been reflected in the reduction of applications to the IMB over the year, as many issues can now be sorted without the need for an intermediary.

5.4 Equality

The majority of this reporting year has seen activities and meetings impacted by low staffing levels. Quarterly equalities meetings have resumed, although the minutes from these have not been shared with the IMB.

The Board has observed that the senior staff member with overall responsibility for equality and diversity is committed to ensuring specific needs and requirements are met, and there are senior leads for each of the protected characteristics. There is not currently any evidence of a strategic planned approach to equality that is being tracked. However, efforts are underway to raise awareness of different equality areas in creative and meaningful ways.

Data on equality also hasn't been shared with the IMB beyond the population data which lists prisoner numbers by age group, nationality and ethnicity. This shows the vast majority of prisoners are aged between 30 and 39, but there are prisoners in all the age groups between 18 and 20 and 70+. During the course of the reporting year, around 89% of the prison population were British nationals. Around 11% were black, Asian or minority ethnic prisoners. It hasn't been possible to review ethnicity data by adjudications or incentives, but it has been possible to review complaint data as mentioned below in 5.7.

Of the 140 applications to the IMB, 5 were equality related (3.6%), up from 4 the year before. As each application focused on a different aspect of equality (religion, disability, age, transgender and racism/homophobia respectively) it doesn't appear there are areas causing disproportionate concern.

The Board includes Equalities as a standing item of each monthly board meeting, and issues raised at these meetings during the year have included:

- support for transgender prisoners
- disability access and inclusion, especially facing wheelchair users (the IMB application box on the wing was moved from the first to the ground floor after feedback)
- treatment of older prisoners
- apparent higher numbers of complaints from ethnic minority prisoners, which will continue to be monitored)
- over-representation of some equality groups in the Orderly Officer Logs data (including higher rates of self-harm among transgender and young prisoners)

These areas will continue to be monitored.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Provision continued throughout the reporting year, and prisoners speak highly to the Board of the personal support they receive.

5.6 Complaints

The prison has a largely effective and well-managed complaints procedure. Prisoners know where to get a Comp1 form and can request help to fill it in. Envelopes for confidential complaints are not always available.

In the reporting year prisoners put in 860 Comp 1s; an average of 72 per month. Some prisoners put in several complaints so the number of individual complainants is less than 860. Approximately 25% of complaints were upheld and action to redress the issue was taken. Out of the 46 Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) submitted, 22 were upheld. The main areas of complaint were property, staffing and residential, including regime, visits and accommodation.

The Board looks at a 10% sample of replies each month. Earlier in the year we had some concerns about timeliness and quality of responses, however, these have improved over the year. More recently nearly all the responses addressed the issues raised with clarity and empathy. Improved guidelines for staff and the use of a standard pro-forma have had a positive effect, reinforced by the interventions from the Standards Coaching Team.

For the first four months of 2023 the Board also monitored the complaints (and responses) from black, Asian and minority ethnic complainants. Data showed a slightly higher rate of complaints among black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners than their percentage in the prison population.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

A Local Delivery Board is scheduled to take place every two months and is attended by the Governor, the head of Spectrum Healthcare, a Commissioner for NHS England, the head of the mental health team and other service leads. An IMB Board member usually observes.

For this reporting year the Board again did not have access to Spectrum's complaints data, making it difficult to investigate concerns raised by prisoners. There appeared to be a disparity between the number of complaints we would expect from the information given to the IMB, and the number recorded by Spectrum. Healthcare issues account for the highest number of IMB applications, with the majority concerning access to controlled medicine or delays in receiving time critical medication. Prisoners reported that they rarely got a reply to their complaints.

The introduction of prisoner laptops created a huge administrative burden for Spectrum as prisoners found it easier to complain; at the start of April 2023, there was a backlog of 80 such complaints. However, it transpired that the majority were not in fact a complaint but more of a request for an appointment, or a query about medication etc. From these 80 complaints, 10 were classed as informal, and 3 were classed as formal, all of which were progressed in line with Spectrum's complaints policy. At the end of the reporting year in response to the problems, a thorough review of the complaints process was begun by Spectrum, with a view to making it more manageable and effective. The Board will continue to monitor this over the next year.

Prisoners' ability to access health services has been negatively affected by shortages of both prison and healthcare staff. Healthcare staffing vacancies and the inconsistency of agency nursing staff has had a detrimental impact on services in the prison. The long-term absence of one member of the clinical staff meant that very little health promotion work was done.

Prisoners' access to healthcare appointments, both internal and external, is dependent on the availability of staff. There is an on-going problem with insufficient prison officers to escort women to external appointments resulting in cancellations and women arriving far too late for their hospital appointments. Problems with the roll check also impact on the delivery of healthcare services by delaying the movement of women, resulting in appointments and clinics being cancelled.

Healthcare appointments and medicine administration appear to take up a disproportionate amount of time and staff resources, and the effect is felt throughout the regime.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Some services at the point of delivery are highly valued by prisoners including dentistry, Drug and Alcohol Reduction Services (DARS), Social Care and physiotherapy, but almost all find the delays and waiting times for appointments unacceptable. Healthcare staff have noted some improvements in the prisoners' access to clinics, with the introduction of limited free flow, where some prisoners can get themselves to appointments. The GP also remarked on the increased attendance at clinics during March and April.

There have been a high number of prisoners who 'did not attend' (DNA) dental check-ups. During the last 3 check up clinics, only 4 out of 15 prisoners attended. From April 1st 2023 the service was reduced to just two days of dental surgeries and one day for a nurse led clinic. There are currently 90 people on the dental waiting list.

The Board still has concerns about the inadequate pharmacy accommodation. Cramped conditions and poor storage facilities make it a difficult working environment for healthcare professionals. Some pharmacy staff also seem to be spending too long discussing medical issues with prisoners, which has a knock on effect with dispensing times. The prisoners sometimes view this as their only opportunity to speak to healthcare staff outside of an appointment.

The inability to consistently provide safe and timely administration of medicine also remains a concern. Delays in the dispensing of morning medicines negatively affects those prisoners receiving time critical treatment. Staffing levels are often inadequate for monitoring medications queues, and despite the best efforts of staff, this potentially leads to trading and bullying. There is little privacy and lack of supervision, allowing prisoners to crowd around the dispensary hatches, out of sight of the officers.

The length of time it takes for prisoners to receive their medication can also be affected by the number of healthcare and prison staff available . For example, when a full complement of staff are scheduled for the dispensing of medication on the main residences, this process can take on average 1.5hrs to complete. In contrast, it can take up to 3.5hrs when less staff are available.

Communication needs improving between healthcare staff and prison staff, and also between healthcare staff and prisoners. Prison staff are not always provided with the correct lists of appointments by healthcare staff, and prisoners are not always escorted to and from clinics in a timely manner. The use of Information Technology (IT) has made the appointments process more efficient, but the appointment times given do not always reflect the timetables and scheduled activities of prisoners. The delays in responding to requests for appointments also lead to increased non-attendance for GP appointments.

Pregnant women and mothers and babies are known to the board and frequently visited- the Board believes they are well cared for by the peri-natal team.

The Board conducted a thematic monitoring exercise during the month of April 2023, looking at the prisoners' access to healthcare appointments and medication dispensing.

6.3 Mental health

The prison takes a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to the care of women with severe and enduring mental ill health; the Board have observed that they try to secure the best possible outcome for every individual. Prisoners in Styal have access to mental health care that is comparable with, and sometimes better than that provided in the community.

Prior to December 2022, the mental health team were seeing approximately 40% of booked appointments, but at the time of reporting with the introduction of free flow, this has increased significantly.

Prisoners who are seriously unwell are monitored by the mental health team and assessed when necessary by the psychiatrist. Referrals are made to outside provision when the prisoner is deemed too ill to remain in Styal. During the early part of 2023, one prisoner was transferred to a mental health unit under Section 47 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

On average 150 prisoners out of a prison population of approximately 380 are supported by the mental health team through a range of interventions including one to one, group work and on-line activities. There is also a bespoke session in the gym for prisoners struggling with mental ill health. A move to better accommodation in the early part of 2023 has improved things for both prisoners and staff. Prisoners can self-refer to the team via their laptop and they can also use it to make appointments with a counselling service provided by an outside agency.

There is increasing collaborative work between the health team, the Women's Estate Psychology Service (WEPS) and specialist support programmes.

6.4 Social care

The Board saw a good working relationship between community care staff, healthcare, and prison staff. Prisoners were often complimentary about the care they received. The provider continues to meet the increased demand for social care, especially for prisoners with learning difficulties/disabilities. In the four months from January 2023 to April 2023 there were nine new referrals, three of which had learning difficulties/disabilities.

On average, 164 hours per month were given to social care. The level of care provided is dependent on need with an average of 8 prisoners qualifying for a funded care package. Prisoners have a wide range of disabilities that mean they need support particularly with mobility and personal care.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Prisoners' time in the fresh air has been negatively affected by shortages of prison staff. However, since January there has been a significant improvement in the consistency of the regime, including exercise, association, and access to purposeful activities.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The drug and alcohol reduction service (DARS) continued to meet the needs of women upon arrival, during their sentence and on release. Prisoners are often complimentary about the care they receive. External partners come into the prison to run groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. For much of the year the DARS team were not able to offer group work but were quick to do so once the full regime was running. They supported prisoners using the 'Breaking Free' online course and recovery gym.

Prisoners with substance dependency are prepared for release with links having been made for them with a local chemist. They are given appropriate medication and details of support organisations in their home area.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The gradual removal of Covid restrictions enabled 722 education course enrolments in 2022/23, as compared with 394 in 2021/22. 543 prisoners completed their course, with a further 26 still ongoing. The predicted success rate, pending the receipt of all results, is 98%. Attendance at education continued to be severely impacted by attendance at other appointments, medication delays and low staffing numbers, as escorts were regularly unavailable for much of the year. These issues improved at the beginning of 2023 and attendance at the end of the reporting year was about 70%. Feedback from prisoners was overwhelmingly positive and reflected the impression that Board members gain from their visits to the prison.

Library provision (managed by the prison) remained poor during the year due to a combination of lack of regular cover for the Literacy Co-ordinator, lack of staff to escort prisoners to and from the library and timetable clashes. The Reading Tutor was appointed at the end of April 2023 and will form an important part of the developing Reading Strategy, involving Novus, the library and the Shannon Trust.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Vocational training continues to be provided in the Hair and Beauty salon and in the Bistro. The Clink continues to provide barista, food and beverage, professional cookery and food safety training for Open prisoners in its restaurant.

The prison has made efforts throughout the year to find employers to provide supervised work in the two empty workshops and the empty call centre, but without success, although at the end of the reporting year it was announced that 'Remade with Hope' are to take over one of the workshops. This will provide work opportunities for up to 15 prisoners, mostly those on short sentences, rebranding products for resale.

The Board remains concerned about the numbers of prisoners suitable for Open conditions or work outside the prison on ROTL. The transfer of suitable prisoners to other establishments means that the prison struggles to fill employment spaces at The Clink and the other identified employment opportunities in the area. It is hard to see, therefore, how the 50 planned additional Open spaces are to be filled.

The gym has, like most areas of the prison, struggled for a large part of the year as a result of staff shortages. Physical Education Instructors (PEIs) have been called away to cover for staff in other areas and it has been difficult to recruit to a vacancy. This has now been filled but the appointee will not be fully trained until later in the year. Several outside organisations, in particular AFC Fylde and Netball England, have provided very popular short courses.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The work of the Offender Management Unit (OMU) was severely impacted over most of the year by staff shortages in the prison. OMU staff were frequently asked to cover for staff elsewhere in the prison, although their own work could not be covered by non-specialists.

Nevertheless, there were 2930 Releases on Temporary Licence (ROTL) of all types during 2022/23, 6 of which failed. This compares with 890 in 2021/22 and 2936 in 2019/20. All recategorisations were dealt with on time. The staffing issues resulted in some delays in timely offender assessment system (OASys) completion but there is no significant backlog at the time of reporting. No 'Thinking Skills Programmes' or other accredited programmes have run for the last two years, due to a lack of qualified staff resulting from problems retaining staff during Covid.

7.4 Family contact

Social visits continued to be allowed in smaller numbers than pre-Covid; maximum numbers for social visits returned to pre-Covid levels in April 2023. Demand was slow to increase in part, as reported by the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact) who are the new contract holders for family services, because of the cost of travel and issues with obtaining acceptable forms of identification. Social video calls declined in popularity partly because of the unpredictability of availability of staff escorts and also, some prisoners have said, because the new system identifies clearly that the call is to a prison.

Prisoners and children are able to take part in joint activities during monthly Family Days and newly introduced Saturday morning social visits, which are proving very popular. Styal issues the highest number of Family Resettlement ROTLs in the female estate. Where it is not feasible for a prisoner to travel home and back in a day, with a reasonable period spent at home, prisoners are encouraged to arrange to meet their families closer to Styal.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Prisoners on remand make up roughly 25-30% of the population at Styal, but no funding is provided to help them with resettlement. Despite the lack of funding, the OMU provides a basic service to remand prisoners but these prisoners are not entitled to assistance with accommodation or employment on release.

The Pre-Release Team and Community Rehabilitative Services (CRS) providers have all struggled to fill vacancies for much of the year, with the result that only minimum services could be provided. This has been compounded by a lack of funding so that by the end of the year it was no longer certain that every prisoner on release could be supplied with a mobile phone and some credit to enable them to make essential calls to, for example, their Community Probation Officer.

Pre-release Boards are now taking place; despite the aforementioned staff shortages, these are reported to the Board to be working well. However, there is said to be scope for greater contributions by some agencies.

The Departure Lounge opened in the Visitors' Centre at the beginning of the reporting year. It provides a place for families to wait to collect prisoners on release. For just-released prisoners it provides, dependent on need and in association with various charities where applicable, last minute advice on things like accommodation, computer access to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding

benefits as well as mobile phones, clothes and basic food parcels. It is highly appreciated by its users.

Official figures show that 87% of prisoners had accommodation to go to on release. The prison's internal figures, backed up by detailed knowledge of individuals, show that the more accurate figure is 96.4%. It has been noticeable over the year how many more prisoners need assistance with accommodation on release; the proportion has increased over the year from 38.5% in the first quarter of the year to 56.3% in the third quarter.

The prison's target for 12-15% of released prisoners to be in employment within 6 weeks of release is difficult to achieve because of the profile of releases each month. In some months as many as 60% of prisoners released were recalled because of a breach of licence conditions. Nevertheless, over the year almost 8% of releases were in employment 6 weeks after release. Styal had the highest number of released prisoners (though not the highest percentage) in employment six weeks after release of all establishments in the female estate.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	376

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	14	21
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	7	5
C	Equality	4	5
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	8	5
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	16	10
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	10	7
F	Food and kitchens	11	2
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	48	40
H1	Property within the establishment	21	18
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	1	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	3	3
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	20	9
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	18	14
K	Transfers	3	4
L	Miscellaneous	19	6
	Total number of applications	203	140

Annex A – List of courses at Styal

Course	Level	Provider source
Functional Skills English (Improved literacy, better understanding of reading, writing and verbal communication)	E3-L2	PEF
Functional Skills Maths (Improved numeracy, better understanding of numbers and money)	E3-L2	PEF
Award in Barista Skills	L2	PEF
City and Guilds Food Hygiene	L2	PEF
NVQ diploma in Hospitality Services level 2	L2	PEF
Diploma in Hairdressing	L1-L3	PEF
Diploma in Nail Technology	L2	PEF
NVQ certificate in Beauty Therapy	L1-L2	PEF
NVQ certificate in Hairdressing and Barbering	L1	PEF
Sycamore Tree and SORI (Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside)		HMPPS
Award in IT User Skills	L1-L2	PEF
Support for Functional Skills		PEF
Support for Functional Skills Foundation		PEF
Support for Functional Skills Advanced		PEF
Cocaine Anonymous and Alcohol Anonymous		Third Party
ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)	L1-L4	PEF
Creative Art		PEF
Creative Arts Foundation		PEF
Creative Arts Advanced		PEF
AFC Fylde		Third Party
England Netball		Third Party
Health and Safety	L1	Third Party
GQA CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme)		Third Party
Bible Studies City and Guilds Strimming and Mowing	L1	HMPPS
City and Guilds Food Production Level 1	L1	The Clink
City and Guilds Food Production and Cookery Level 2	L2	The Clink
Food Safety		The Clink
City and Guilds Professional Cookery Level 2	L2	The Clink
City and Guilds Barista Level 2	L2	The Clink
City and Guilds Food and Beverages Level 2	L2	The Clink



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