



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Lancaster Farms**

**For reporting year  
February 2022 – January 2023**

**Published September 2023**



# Contents

<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Executive summary	5
<b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	12
5. Fair and humane treatment	15
6. Health and wellbeing	22
7. Progression and resettlement	25
<b>The work of the IMB</b>	
Board statistics	28
Applications to the IMB	29

All IMB annual reports are published on [www.imb.org.uk](http://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 Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 2. Description of the establishment

HMP Lancaster Farms is a category C resettlement prison, with accommodation for up to 560 adult male prisoners during the reporting year.<sup>1</sup>

The prison benefits from having a large open central area with grass and flowerbeds, large communal spaces on each wing, and buildings that are generally in a fair state of repair. Most wing accommodation is in single cells; however, the number of double cells with bunk beds has increased in recent years. There are four cells specially adapted for prisoners with reduced mobility.

The prison was opened in 1993 as a youth offender institution but later converted to an adult male prison. While it has an attractive layout, some buildings are beginning to show signs of wear and tear. The prison has four main residential blocks, each divided into two wings. Since the end of the pandemic the Grizedale unit has reverted to being a dedicated first night unit (FNU) for prisoners recently arrived at the prison. The reporting unit saw the end of one wing, Buttermere 2, being a reverse cohorting unit (RCU) to accommodate and quarantine new prisoners for their first two weeks at the prison. The FNU was also used as an additional RCU for some periods.

The care and separation unit (CSU) in the Ullswater unit holds 12 prisoners. Accommodation is provided in single cells, two of which have closed-circuit television installed. In addition, there are two special cells.

A number of prison services are provided on a contracted-out basis. Healthcare services are provided by Spectrum Community Health community interest company (Spectrum). Spectrum also provides the substance misuse service, with mental health services subcontracted to Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and pharmacy services being managed in-house. Rehabilitation services are provided by Sodexo Justice Services and Purple Futures, with both companies contracting Seetec to deliver resettlement. The prison maintenance contract is undertaken by Amey plc. Novus delivers education services under the offender learning and skills service contract.

The prison has re-established its positive community engagement with local schools and a growing relationship with a number of local employers. Strong links also exist with local football clubs and there have been many excellent charitable collections and donations by staff and prisoners.

---

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

### **3. Executive summary**

#### **3.1 Background to the report**

3.1.1 During the year there has been a phased introduction of the prison's post-pandemic regime. However, there were occasions when the Board questioned whether this could have been speedier.

3.1.2 While the Board recognises the progress the Prison Service made in returning to a normal regime in 2022-23, there were occasions when changes being made in the community were not implemented as speedily within the prison. This impacted particularly upon out-of-cell and purposeful activities.

3.1.3 The Board notes that the pandemic led to a policy of reducing significantly the amount of time out of cell for association or purposeful activities. While these measures were aimed at reducing infection risks, the Board notes that enforced confinement within cells for over 20 hours per day does not appear to be consistent with humane treatment of prisoners.

3.1.4 During 2022 the Board was alerted to problems in staffing levels at the prison. Staff shortages led to reductions in some out-of-cell activities. In summary, the Board would prefer to see more time for association and purposeful activities.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

##### **How safe is the prison?**

3.2.1 The Board's monitoring of the prison continues to reveal that the Governor and prison staff work hard to offer and, to a large extent, succeed in providing a safe environment for prisoners at HMP Lancaster Farms. The Board has observed effective management of risks at safety intervention meetings and successful collaboration between governors, safer custody, custodial managers, the mental health team and the chaplaincy.

3.2.2 At the beginning of the reporting year there were still some measures to reduce the infection risk via restrictions in the regime and the presence of the RCU. The Board acknowledges that these measures were successful at controlling the spread of the virus within the prison. Relatively small numbers of prisoners caught Covid during the year.

3.2.3 The Board notes the continuation of high levels of self-harm among a small handful of prisoners, many of whom have challenging and complex mental health needs yet continue to be accommodated at the establishment rather than transferred to more specialist and secure mental health facilities.

3.2.4 Alongside limited movement around the prison during the pandemic, there were reduced levels of violence, prisoner debt and substance misuse. Whilst the Board welcomed improvements in safety, it did mean that prisoners had reduced periods of time outside their cells. However, during the reporting year the regime returned to pre-pandemic levels, and there were more instances of low-level violent activity peaking in October 2022'.

### **How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?**

3.2.5 The Board believes that, to a large extent, prisoners at HMP Lancaster Farms are treated fairly and humanely, with considerable care taken by prison staff to treat prisoners with decency and respect. In-cell telephony (introduced in November 2021) has been very well received by prisoners and by the Board.

3.2.6 As in previous years' reports, the Board notes that a minority of prisoners continue to be accommodated on occasions in double cells with limited toilet screening and/or no toilet seats. Whilst it is now normal for prisoners to eat out of their cells, there are still occasions whereby, during lockdowns, prisoners are forced to eat inside their cells next to their toilets.

3.2.7 Steps have been taken to undertake some refurbishment of cells, showers and association areas. However, through its monitoring, the Board has identified some outstanding issues, such as poor ventilation in some cells and the absence of some door screens, broken equipment on some exercise yards and some overflows or poor drainage in wet weather.

3.2.8 The Board has encountered evidence relating to the handling of complaints from prisoners. While the number of overdue complaints is relatively low, some responses to complaints are delayed (especially those related to previous prisons). Of concern also is that prisoners are sometimes not kept updated on progress.

3.2.9 The treatment of prisoners' property remains an issue of concern for the Board.

### **How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?**

3.2.10 Monitoring by the Board during this reporting year suggests that, to a large extent, the prison has continued to offer reasonable levels of primary healthcare to prisoners.

3.2.11 The provision of mental healthcare within the prison continues to face many challenges. The overall level of staffing for mental health services and staff shortages are matters of concern for the Board. Much therapeutic work has resumed after the pandemic but there remain difficulties in finding suitable alternative specialist accommodation at other prisons for those facing serious mental health difficulties.

3.2.12 The Board recognises the range of initiatives deployed to provide prisoners with access to physical fitness activities in exercise yards and the well-resourced gym. And the Board is very impressed by the new Crossfit programme.

### **How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?**

3.2.13 As face-to-face education provision without prisoners remaining in their wing cohorts has been re-established during the year, the Board has monitored prisoners' progress during the year.

3.2.14 Most prison workplaces functioned at reduced capacity at the start of the year to help manage infection risk. This resulted in limited progress towards the completion of vocational courses and less valuable work experience than is normally offered to prisoners. However, this improved substantially during 2022-23, with a number of new employment opportunities.

3.2.15 The Board regrets that offending behaviour programmes were much reduced during the pandemic. Their re-introduction did take place slowly during the reporting year but that delay led to significant obstacles for prisoners seeking progression to category D status during the year, and concerns among prisoners, shared by the Board, regarding the fairness of this.

3.2.16 Restrictions due to the Covid-19 infection risk affected the availability of visits at the beginning of the year. During 2022 full visiting was re-introduced. Online video meetings between prisoners and families continued to be available (especially important for prisoners at some distance from their family and friends).

### **3.3 Main areas for development**

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

3.3.1 Given concerns expressed above, to invite Department of Health colleagues to work with the minister to review the capacity of provision of mental health services and provide more secure mental health provision across the prison estate for those prisoners with severe and enduring mental illness.

3.3.2 Whilst many recommendations were accepted, there were some recommendations in the Justice Select Committee's report that were rejected. Can an action plan be established urgently to reduce the number of prisoners serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences.

3.3.3 To fund the Prison Service for the growth and maintenance of effective staffing levels.

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

3.3.4 To further improve the strategies available to the prison to manage and reduce the number of incidents of self-harm, particularly among the small number of prisoners who frequently self-harm and could be assessed as demonstrating severe mental health difficulties.

3.3.5 To conduct a wide-ranging review of prison staffing, to address the loss of experienced staff and of a large percentage of new staff that leave within 12 months of recruitment.

3.3.6 To ensure more focus on purposeful activities, including programmes to support sentence planning, and full-time education and training and job readiness.

3.3.7 To reduce losses of property as it transfers across the Prison Service.

## **TO THE GOVERNOR**

3.3.8 To support growth in the amount of purposeful activity, including education, training, work and association.

3.3.9 To ensure that maximum opportunities are given to enable prisoners to spend time outside their cells.

3.3.10 To ensure that any work in regard to toilets in double cells is speedily addressed: broken screens, lack of toilet seats, etc.

3.3.11 To review and progress improvements and repairs to ventilation in residential areas and drainage outside residential areas, including exercise areas.

3.3.12 To ensure the effective use of body-worn cameras by prison staff.

3.3.13 To improve communication with prisoners in key areas such as the progress towards resolving or responding to complaints, availability of programmes and the reasons for re-categorisation.

3.3.14 To monitor the number of Listeners. Given the turnover of existing Listeners, to ensure that there is a rolling programme of training for future Listeners.

3.3.15 To ensure that processes previously agreed with the Board, such as that the Board will be notified immediately following the deployment of PAVA, deaths in custody or the use of the special cell, are implemented. And that the Board receives responses to issues it raises in its weekly reports.

3.3.16 To ensure that contact between prisoners and their key workers becomes more effective.

## **3.4 Progress since the last report**

Issue raised	<i>Response given</i>	Action taken
To further improve the strategies available to the prison to manage and reduce the number of incidents of self-harm, particularly among the small number of prisoners who frequently self-harm and could be assessed as demonstrating severe mental health difficulties.	Preventative approach to safety through specialist support, developing bespoke interventions, testing new technology and key change to physical environment.	There is evidence of a continuing number (albeit small) of prisoners that frequently self-harm.
Given concerns expressed above, to invite the Department of Health colleagues to review the capacity associated with the provision of mental	Working with NHS England to develop a pathway for men with mental illness. Also development of core capabilities framework.	Those presenting with severe and enduring mental illness often find themselves on the segregation unit. Survey undertaken autumn 2022.



health services across the prison estate for those prisoners with severe and enduring mental illness.		Transfers to specialist units limited due to lack of capacity.
To reduce the number of IPP prisoners.	Committed to develop progression of those serving indeterminate sentences. Bespoke IPP action plan.	Still ongoing.
To fund the Prison Service for the growth and maintenance of effective staffing levels.	Major concern that will be addressed as pandemic ends.	Loss of staffing identified in first six months of the report. New apprenticeship model and pay settlement has enhanced recruitment and retention in last six months.
To provide 'surge funding' for learning and skills provision and programme provision to remedy shortcomings in the preparation for resettlement and sentence planning caused by the Covid pandemic.	Funding already allocated for 2022-23. Programmes such as Thinking Skills, Resolve and Challenge to Change already prioritised.	Extra funding not identified. However, new employment focus has increased some training and workshop activities.
To conduct a wide-ranging review of prison staffing to address the loss of experienced staff and the loss of a large percentage of new staff that leave within twelve months of recruitment.	Develop new outreach strategy.	As above.
As Covid restrictions are removed, to ensure more focus on purposeful activities, including programmes to support sentence planning, and full-time education and training and job readiness.	Employment opportunities are now 'embedded at Lancaster Farms' (Minister).	Return to normal regime during first six months of the report. Delays in reintroducing programmes to support sentence planning; and in returning to full-time education and training activities.
To reduce losses of property as it transfers across the prison service.	Prisoner Property Policy Framework – published summer 2022	No discernible change in number of applications regarding property transfers between prisons.

To address shortcomings in the contracts for resettlement activity, canteen provision and education and training.	Descriptive account of problems experienced in 2021-22.	No discernible progress.
To support growth in the amount of purposeful activity, including education, training, work and association.	<i>None.</i>	As above.
As Covid measures are removed, to enable prisoners to eat outside their cells.	<i>None.</i>	Largely now in place.
To ensure that any work regarding toilets in double cells are addressed: broken screens, lack of toilet seats, etc.	<i>None.</i>	Rolling programme of repairs.
To review and progress improvements and repairs to ventilation in residential areas and drainage outside residential areas, including exercise areas.	<i>None.</i>	Still a problem in some areas. Problems of dampness identified within some buildings in 2022-23.
To improve the use of body-worn cameras by prison staff.	<i>None.</i>	Raised throughout the year. New cameras introduced January 2023. Board will remain vigilant regarding use.
To improve communication with prisoners in key areas, such as the progress towards resolving or responding to complaints, availability of programmes and the reasons for recategorisation.	<i>None.</i>	Communication remains an issue underpinning a large proportion of applications to the IMB.
To ensure that there is a rolling programme of training for new Listeners (given turnover of prisoners in a category C resettlement prison), including the completion of the programme halted because of the pandemic.	<i>None.</i>	Original programme completed. Increased number of listeners but, given Lancaster Farms is a resettlement prison, need for regular review of the programme as appropriate.
To confirm that processes previously agreed with the	<i>None.</i>	Patchy. Seems to depend on who is the duty

Board, such as that the Board will be notified immediately following the deployment of PAVA, deaths in custody or the use of the special cell are implemented. And that the appointment to the vacant position of IMB clerk is prioritised, with a clear remit for that person to support better communication between the prison and IMB.		governor on particular days.
To ensure that contact between prisoners and their key workers becomes more effective.	<i>None.</i>	Still a major concern to the Board.
To take further steps to ensure food hygiene logs are completed for each wing at each meal, and that food temperatures are routinely logged.	<i>None.</i>	Still an issue.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception and induction**

4.1.1 At the start of the year there was still a priority to manage different cohorts of prisoners to minimise the spread of the pandemic. During the reporting year numbers have fluctuated between approximately 540 and 560.

4.1.2 While the Prison Service claims to restrict the number of prisoners moving across its estate on a Friday afternoon, there have been many instances of arrivals on Friday afternoons during the year. This has an impact on both staff and prisoners, including the induction process, medication transfers and food availability. The prison seeks to minimise any difficulties, but the Board has been alerted to some problems experienced by staff and prisoners.

4.1.3 Overall, the Board remains very positive about the reception service and induction programme for new prisoners to the prison. In August 2022, 92% of prisoners commented positively on how they were treated in reception.

4.1.4 At the beginning of the reporting year, both Buttermere 2 and Grizedale maintained their role as the prison's RCU. But during the year such restrictions were removed. In early 2022 there were restrictions on the degree of mixing between prisoners on different wings. The Board noted the good management of the RCU and its effectiveness in limiting the spread of Covid-19 within the prison.

#### **4.2 Suicide, self-harm, deaths in custody**

4.2.1 Sadly, one death in custody occurred during the reporting year. This has been subject to investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and HM Coroner.

4.2.2 At certain times of the year (eg November 2022) the incidence of self-harm has spiked. Whilst often a small number of prisoners make up the majority of cases, the Board remains vigilant in its attention to such prisoners. The reasons given for self-harming include: feeling stressed, poor emotional control, being placed on report, adjudication losses, mental health reasons, not wanting to be located in the CSU, wanting vapes or telephone credit and being distressed following a bad visit. The safer custody team monitors and proactively manages these prisoners through multidisciplinary interventions, including the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) process. A debt reduction policy (including debt forums) has been a good example of proactive activity to reduce triggers that lead to self-harm.

4.2.3 The Board has observed the use of the constant watch cell during the year. We have been impressed by the sympathetic work of prison staff and the good relationships between staff and prisoners at risk of self-harm.

4.2.4 The Samaritans resumed its training of new Listeners during 2022 (delayed by the Covid pandemic). Whilst the number of Listeners increased, the number has since declined as Listeners progress through recategorisation or release.

4.2.5 The ACCT process sits alongside the challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) process to manage prisoners at increased risk of harming others or who are vulnerable, with cases coordinated by the safer custody team. Prisoners can self-refer for support. This is advertised on the Prison Service Wayout TV.

4.2.6 Safety intervention meetings take place weekly, to review ongoing cases and action plan interventions, and coordinate activities by a multidisciplinary team, including healthcare, mental health, chaplaincy, safer custody, residential and custodial managers. Board members have identified good practice in supporting vulnerable prisoners. Senior members of the prison leadership team attend the meetings and actively oversee its work.

4.2.7 OUT Spoken (a voluntary sector organisation supporting male victims of sexual abuse, rape and sexual exploitation) has developed further during 2022-23. The service provides additional mental health support for those who have suffered trauma.

### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

4.3.1 Whilst the number of assaults is higher than during the pandemic lockdowns, numbers are relatively low. The number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults spiked at 14 in December 2022 (third lowest in the comparator group of prisons) and assaults on staff spiked in both July and November 2022 (six in each month: second lowest in the comparator group).

4.3.2 The number of individual isolators continues to be very small; this has been linked to the denial of isolator status unless the prisoner discloses who he is isolating from. Any prisoner seeking isolation is supported via the CSIP process, and a full investigation is conducted to ensure that information provided by the prisoner is credible. While potentially controversial, when properly managed on the wing, the threat is also managed. Evidence also indicates less use of the CSU. Most problems are solved on the wings through effective management by wing and safer custody staff.

### **4.4 Use of force**

4.4.1 There were 259 use of force incidents in 2022-23: 41 planned interventions and 218 spontaneous interventions. In addition, the Board attended governance meetings, where video evidence was played from body-worn cameras (BWCs) and CCTV cameras across the estate. The use of force was reviewed and comments recorded. For much of 2022, the Board was concerned by the limited use of BWCs. During the year, there have been varying levels of encouragement to wear such cameras. However, in January 2023 new BWCs were introduced at the prison. Issue

of BWCs has since increased. Mandatory training has been established for all relevant staff, but it is too soon to monitor their effectiveness.

4.4.2 Concern about the use of PAVA in 2021-22 on one occasion led to an investigation and a report was produced. One outcome was a staff training programme that took place during 2022. Since then, PAVA has been utilised on just one occasion.

## **4.5 Preventing illicit items**

4.5.1 Enhanced gate security, a scanner in the prisoner reception area, perimeter security, cell searches and the use of specialist dog teams have all assisted the control of illicit items. During the year, there have been a number of drone incidents (and throwovers) when phones or drugs have been found within the prison estate.

4.5.2 In November 2022 the prison received an 'unsatisfactory' rating for a security audit. One key factor was the recent appointment of new staff who lacked experience and a full understanding of security matters.

4.5.3 As Covid-19 restrictions eased during the year, finds of some illicit substances increased, particularly hooch, which can be brewed with ingredients obtained within the prison. Cannabis and paper laced with psychoactive substances have also been found. One concern (August 2022) is that 24% of prisoners find it easy to obtain illicit drugs at the prison.

4.5.4 Enhanced spot checks are used by the prison staff to identify and support prisoners holding illicit substances as part of a debt.

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

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

5.1.1 Service of the evening meal takes place between 4.30pm and 5pm each day. This does not mirror the timing of an evening meal in the community, where it would interfere with the normal working day. There is also a long gap before breakfast (which is provided late afternoon the previous day).

5.1.2 Unsolicited feedback from prisoners to members of the Board on our visits to the residential units indicates that, overall, the quality of the food provided in the establishment is good. The Board has noted incomplete servery logs that detail the temperature of the food when it arrives at the residential units.

5.1.3 Efforts are made to provide meals in accordance with religious festivals and take account of fasting periods – for example, during the observance of Ramadan. Insulated food boxes are provided to enable these prisoners to break the fast at dusk, which could be after 9pm. However, the insulated boxes do not retain heat for any extended period, and there is no opportunity to reheat food at dusk.

5.1.4 At the beginning of the year all meals were consumed in-cell (sometimes in shared cells with a toilet in the corner of the cell). During the year opportunities to eat out of cell were reintroduced and new dining-out furniture was purchased.

5.1.5 The introduction of in-cell telephony in November 2021 was widely welcomed by the prisoners, staff and the Board. Periodically, the Board receives applications from prisoners unable to access particular phone numbers. The Board has pursued such complaints and understands the detailed process and checks to enable prisoners to contact outside phone numbers.

5.1.6 Some residential units are in need of updating and have periodic maintenance issues, including water pooling from overflowing waste pipes and leaking guttering. These are noted in rota reports completed by Board members following inspections of the units. Duck excrement on the paths and entrances to residential units remains a cause of complaint, being both unsightly and unhygienic. The Board has proposed a maintenance team of prisoners be established to clean the areas in line with health and safety guidelines.

5.1.7 Ventilation of some residential areas has been a problem, especially during hot weather. It has been a long-standing issue on Grizedale, which contains a number of shared cells with limited passive ventilation available. A permanent solution needs to be found to address this issue.

5.1.8 The provision and replacement of damaged toilet screens, seats and lids is a particular issue in shared cells and has an impact on maintaining decency.

5.1.9 During 2022-23, price inflation hit canteen prices. However, there was no parallel percentage increase in the wages and allowances for prisoners.

## **5.2 Segregation, special accommodation**

5.2.1 Ullswater wing remains as the segregation unit (CSU). Adjoining the unit there are four outside areas penned for outdoor exercise (some with exercise equipment).

5.2.3 Members of the Board attended five reviews during the course of the year and noted in rota reports that prisoners were dealt with in a fair and just manner.

5.2.4 Numbers on the segregation unit vary from two to nine prisoners on our visits. There has been a small number of prisoners kept on the unit for their personal protection or awaiting transfer.

5.2.5 Board members have reported many times on the positive attitudes and relationships shown by staff on the CSU during some of the most challenging behaviour shown by prisoners.

5.2.6 The Board has raised the issue of the lack of in-cell occupation several times with staff and has been told that it was logistically 'too difficult' to provide.

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

5.3.1 The key worker scheme is designed to build positive one-to-one relationships between prisoners and staff, with the aim of promoting rehabilitation, reducing reoffending and acting as a central contact between other services within the prison. This work is pivotal to enable the prisoner to navigate through often complex prison processes and procedures, and act as a conduit with probation and offender managers and others. Relationships between staff and prisoners overall are seen as good and positive.

5.3.2 The establishment was the subject of an inspection by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) in August 2022. Not only did the Board have the chance to speak to the inspection team, but it found that outcomes were in line with the views expressed by the Board.

5.3.3 The prison seeks to provide key worker contact sessions for every prisoner, and comments from prisoners indicate some issues regarding the amount of key worker activity across the prison. The prison has identified quality and consistency of the key work as needing further development and training as this new initiative becomes embedded across the establishment. This remains a priority for the senior management team of the prison.

5.3.4 Having the key worker based on the same residential unit as the prisoner they are supporting is seen as the ideal. However, in reality, the key worker may be detailed to a different residential unit or the prisoner moved to a different wing. The



challenge for the establishment is to maintain consistency as the prisoner transitions through the progression plan as part of the overall resettlement planning journey.

5.3.5 Despite the introduction of a custodial manager with responsibility for key work delivery, we have found occasions when prisoners have no awareness of their key worker, long lists of prisoners with the same key worker, and no regular meeting with their key worker.

5.3.6 During the reporting year, the establishment also initiated a system of welfare checks with vulnerable prisoners, together with purposeful interactions between staff and prisoners to build better relationships and address any concerns. This has been evidenced in key worker entries and during the ACCT process. Overall, the work and relationships are good and very positive.

5.3.7 HMPPS recommends a minimum of 45 minutes of key worker contact time per prisoner per week as soon as the establishment returns to a full regime. However, this does not appear to be the norm across the prison.

## **5.4 Equality and diversity**

5.4.1 A new appointment to the role of diversity and inclusion manager (DIM) occurred during the reporting year. There was a gap and incomplete data during the transition period when one DIM left and another was appointed. The IMB is invited to attend the multidisciplinary meetings of the equality action team and is provided with the reports and data analysed at these meetings to identify any areas of concern and trends and to action plan where necessary.

5.4.2 The age demographic across the establishment reveals that more prisoners (37% in August 2022) are within the age range 30–39 years. The youngest is 21 years of age, and there is a spread of prisoner ages up to the age of 69.

5.4.3 The Board has applauded the senior management team re their plans to manage and support a transgender prisoner during the year.

5.4.4 The Board receives regular updates through the minutes of the equality action team of the number of discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) and outcomes of investigations. During the reporting year 62 DIRFs were submitted: an increase of 20 on the 42 in 2021-22 (17 of the 62 DIRFs were dealt with as a complaint rather than DIRF). Analysis reveals a number were multiple applications by some men. Some should have been submitted through the prison complaints system rather than the DIRF process.

5.4.5 Racist and homophobic language and derogatory comments have been identified as a cause for complaint. The IMB's experience is that the DIRF process is not well understood and residents have little confidence in the investigation process or outcomes. The allocation of work activities, including wing cleaners and jobs on the servery, does not appear to follow a fair, open and transparent recruitment

process and this is a source of complaints. This experience is echoed and recorded in the HMIP report of August 2022 following their unannounced inspection.

5.4.6 Disability markers indicated that 41% of men were reported to have a disability. Yet C-NOMIS reports show that, in December 2022, only 26% of the prison's population were recorded as having a disability (145 men). The data on reported disabilities and those recorded on C-NOMIS needs to be clarified in order to have an accurate snapshot baseline. It is accepted that a prisoner may be recorded as having multiple disabilities.

5.4.7 HMIP, in its report of August 2022, identified weaknesses in recording residents with physical disabilities requiring assistance and those with reduced mobility requiring assistance from their peers who provided informal care. The prisoner carers need to be trained, supported and paid for the work they do. Currently, 13 residents have a personal emergency evacuation plan in place. The IMB has reviewed half of these that follow a standard format.

5.4.8 The establishment does not currently have a neurodiversity support lead but intends to recruit to this role within the next reporting year.

5.4.9 Consultation fora had taken place or were planned with residents in a number of protected characteristic groups, including age (21-25 years and over 60), disability, LGBT, ethnicity (Black and Asian, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller), and foreign nationals. Approximately 16 residents are categorised as care-experienced and a specific forum for this group is being organised. Foreign national prisoners make up a small percentage of the population, amounting to three people in total (one Albanian, one Hungarian, and one Romanian). While they are few in number, the Board is concerned that a small number of prisoners who are accommodated at the prison have virtually no conversational skills in English. Whilst liaison with HMP Risley (with its specialist staff) takes place to support the specific needs of this group of prisoners, there was evidence that prisoners could not take advantage of that support. The establishment also does not have any English for speakers of other languages provision in education for this group.

5.4.10 The number of equality representatives varied across the reporting year due to release or transfer to other establishments. By early 2023, the establishment had nine equality representatives. Training needs are being assessed to best support the men undertaking this function. The Board interviewed some of the representatives, and they report being encouraged and supported by the DIM and being consulted on plans to further develop the equalities agenda within the establishment. One of the representatives attended and contributed to the last equality action team meetings during this reporting year and was positive and enthusiastic about his experiences in this role.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

5.5.1 The chaplaincy has a number of key functions, not only in providing religious services but also as a source of pastoral care and support to the prisoners, staff and family members. Much has changed within the chaplaincy, with the appointment of a new managing chaplain in March 2022.

5.5.2 The chaplaincy initiated a volunteer day in September 2022, resulting in 18 volunteers registering in some capacity to support and deliver the chaplaincy service. Within the substantive chaplains, there has been a new full time Roman Catholic (RC) post created, with a new RC priest being appointed and a national rollout of Latter Day Saints chaplains, including in Lancaster Farms. The long-term sickness absence and transfer of the Church of England chaplain has resulted in a gap in provision for the 15.75% (86 men) of this denomination within the establishment. The vacancy is currently being advertised.

5.5.3 In May 2022 the chaplaincy team underwent its quadrennial chaplaincy inspection quality audit. Overall, the result was positive, but with further action to develop the Official Prison Visitors scheme. Prison visitors are volunteers who will see any prisoner requesting a visit.

5.5.4 The chaplaincy contributes significantly to the safer custody priorities for the establishment, including the launch of a money management course. Invited guest motivational speakers and artists attend the chaplaincy from numerous charities, such as the Christian Motorcyclists Association, The Message Trust and Proclaim Trust.

5.5.5 A new Pagan, Hindu and Christian library has been created and supplied in part by charities. Not all faith groups have a chaplain; gaps include those to meet the needs of Rastafarians (one prisoner) and Pagan prisoners (one currently), who do not require this at present due to them preferring to practise alone.

5.5.6 Corporate worship and study groups are offered weekly and are less frequent depending upon availability of smaller faith chaplains who cover multiple sites, e.g. Hindu (one prisoner), Sikh, and Jewish (one prisoner) chaplains.

5.5.7 Religious festivals have been observed as far as possible, with a calendar of notable dates posted on each residential unit to show where the prisoners may be excused from work to observe their faith.

5.5.8 The chaplaincy continues to support prisoners following bereavements and has recently started offering the Living with Loss course, supported by volunteers. The Chaplaincy continues to support prisoners in their applications to attend funerals, and to facilitate online 'attendance' when it has not been possible to send prisoners out under escort. Virtual visits are now being offered on occasion, using an iPad, to those prisoners not meeting the eligibility criteria for funeral attendance.

5.5.9 The chaplaincy team continues to offer pastoral support to those of all faiths or none, on request. It also provided a significant commitment to the ACCT process; the majority of ACCT reviews are attended by a chaplain. Additionally, the chaplaincy visits the CSU on a daily basis to speak to each prisoner held there. The chaplaincy has strengthened its partnership with the offender management unit (OMU) and identified two cohorts needing further support and a safe space for peer to peer support to take place, with concerns and issue explored. A weekly support group for under 25s is delivered by the Free Church chaplain and a volunteer, and targeted outreach to this group also occurs regularly on the wings. A monthly lifers'

group is delivered by an imam and a probation officer, and plans are in place for further support groups to be launched this year.

5.5.10 The prison continues to benefit from community engagement, and initiated a successful pilot of the Sycamore Tree Course (victim awareness restorative justice) in September 2022, with plans to deliver four courses annually.

## **5.6 Incentives scheme**

5.6.1. There are three levels of privilege in the prison: basic, standard and enhanced, with generally around 1% of prisoners on basic, 57% on standard and 42% on enhanced. Reviews of prisoners on the basic level usually take place every seven days; however, at times during the year, these reviews were undertaken at 72 hours.

5.6.2 Following the pandemic, the Board notes that independent adjudications have continued to take place remotely. In our 2022/23 monitoring, we have expressed concerns about the technology and camera, which disadvantages all parties.

## **5.7 Complaints**

5.7.1 Complaints (using form COMP1) and appeals (using COMP1A) are administered by the complaints clerk. It has been valuable to have a dedicated member of staff working on this activity throughout the year.

5.7.2 The percentage of overdue complaints is approximately 10%; these have been predominantly related to property and other complaints at prisons from where prisoners have been transferred. The impact on prisoners, in terms of frustration and uncertainty, is clear from our monitoring work. In these cases, more regular updates and acknowledgments of the delay could be issued to prisoners.

5.7.3 We also note that some applications from prisoners to the Board make reference to complaints submitted, and to a level of dissatisfaction with the content of responses to those complaints.

5.7.4 The prison, including the Board, receives a small number of confidential complaints each year. While these complaints are predominantly related to sensitive personal information about a prisoner and/or member of staff, any response to the Board from management appears to be ad hoc.

## **5.8 Property**

5.8.1 Applications to the Board relating to property accounted for around 20% of all applications in 2022/23, which is similar to the proportions in 2020/21 and 2021/22. A common theme is property not transferred into the establishment at the same time as the prisoner. The delay or loss of property, including documents, family photographs and other personal possessions that are difficult or impossible to replace, has caused additional anxiety and stress.

5.8.2 The additional work for prison staff attempting to track down missing property during the transfer of prisoners between establishments absorbs scarce resources

and involves manual recording processes. Regrettably, once a prisoner transfers out of the previous establishment, it is sometimes difficult to obtain satisfactory responses to enquiries about their property. These issues are not new and not unique to this establishment; this is a national issue, repeated in many other prisons, and requiring action from HMPPS. Further work is needed to address systemic and recurring issues in the management of prisoners' property.

5.8.3 Confusion over what property can be sent to a prisoner by family members causes frustration. Sometimes parcels are not accepted by the establishment or are returned to family members without the prisoner being advised that the property has been sent back.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare: general**

6.1.1 Spectrum is the main provider of healthcare services at the prison. Mental healthcare services are run by Tees, Esk and Wear Valley, and dentistry by Smart Dental. Staff numbers remain at approximately 40. Sometimes there have been problems in recruitment of clinical and support staff. Future radiography and ultrasound services are planned for 2023-24.

6.1.2 The waiting times for GP services have varied throughout the year but typically have been up to three weeks. Whilst the waiting time for routine dentistry was at 20 weeks in 2021-22, it had increased to 26-30 weeks during 2022-23.

6.1.3 The health checks at reception include checks for bloodborne diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV and syphilis. In accordance with the prison elimination programme, and the prison is able to treat positive cases of hepatitis C with an eight-week programme of treatment. Healthcare staff are also able to administer any missing childhood vaccinations when these are discovered on reception into the establishment.

6.1.4 The reverse cohorting procedures early in the reporting year, along with other measures, such as the prison's own contact-tracing practices, helped to avert outbreaks of Covid. During the year there were one-off incidences of Covid at the prison.

6.1.5 In rota visits, prisoners are generally positive about the standard of healthcare they receive.

6.1.6 Healthcare complaints are dealt with by the healthcare manager and predominantly concern the types of analgesics available in the establishment. Applications relating to healthcare received by the Board remain at approximately 12.5-13% of overall applications.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

6.2.1 Vaccination take-up (including flu and Covid-19) generally mirrored that of the general community, with older prisoners being more willing to be vaccinated. The Board is pleased to note that healthcare staff were proactive in trying to persuade reluctant prisoners to take up vaccines. By January 2023, 60% of prisoners had their vaccinations.

6.2.3 The prison does not have 24-hour healthcare provision and is reliant on other establishments to accept prisoners requiring more intensive healthcare. In addition, a number of prisoners are taken to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary for appointments. On occasions, especially if in-patient care is required, this causes disruption to the prison regime, as two officers need to be on duty at the hospital at all times.

### **6.3 Mental healthcare**

6.3.1 Over 60% of prisoners have mental health problems (prison survey from August 2022). Despite considerable pressures staff are able to respond to routine referrals within four working days and urgent referrals in one working day. However, 40% of prisoners (survey August 2022) state that they have been unable to access mental health services. The service is able to recruit to any vacancies that occur.

6.3.2 During 2022, group therapies were re-established at the prison. Access to the OUT Spoken trauma therapy service, with its two visiting counsellors, has further developed this year. There are several members of staff trained in dialectical behaviour therapy.

6.3.4 The services of psychiatrists for two sessions per week have been maintained.

## **6.4 Social care**

6.4.1 The prison liaises with Lancashire County Council in respect of social care, with prison staff undertaking the initial assessment. Whilst outside agencies provide assessments they are not generally called on to provide social care to prisoners. During rota visits, members of the Board both observed and spoke to prisoners providing practical support – for example, pushing those who are wheelchair dependent to the health centre and providing some in-cell tasks, such as making hot drinks. This arrangement appeared to work well, with prisoners both giving and receiving support expressing their satisfaction. A new buddy system is planned for 2023 as part of a new training programme for prisoners seeking to become carers in the community.

## **6.5 Exercise, regime**

6.5.1 While the regime throughout the period of this report changed in line with pandemic guidelines and staffing shortages, the Board acknowledges that a period of outdoor exercise was maintained throughout the year for all prisoners. All wings benefit from an outside exercise area which, apart from the CSU and first night unit, contains outdoor gym equipment. This was well used throughout the various regime changes and noted by the Board during their visits to the establishment. On occasions the gym is underused, particularly at weekends. It has also been regrettable that staff shortages during the year have led to some gym sessions being withdrawn.

6.5.2 There is a very well-resourced gym. Sessions in the gym for those referred by healthcare staff take place in the evenings. Healthcare referrals can be for both physical and mental health reasons. Both the fitness suite and the sports hall have wheelchair access.

6.5.4 During the year a new rehabilitation programme (Project 180/Crossfit), focussed on fitness and teamwork, was established. Excellent relationships formed part of the success of this programme, and the Board observed training sessions in the gym. Seventy-nine men have been supported as part of their resettlement: men become fitter and lose weight, and indicative statistics show that there is reduced reoffending amongst this cohort.

6.5.5 The physical education and offender management teams delivered the first Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at Lancaster Farms. It has been instrumental in building skills and confidence amongst younger prisoners (aged 21-34). Feedback has been positive.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

6.6.1 Spectrum continues to provide the substance misuse service at the prison, and group sessions were re-established during 2022-23. Approximately 180 prisoners are seen by the service each week.

6.6.2 The Board is supportive of the substance misuse team, which feels that uniformed staff could learn more about its work. This could further help achieve the drug rehabilitation goals of Coniston wings (see below).

6.6.3 The Coniston wings have key drug rehabilitation foci with Coniston 1 (C1) being the incentivised substance living unit and Coniston (C2) holding some prisoners being treated for their addiction with methadone. Prisoners on C2 work to reduce their dosage of methadone and make informed choices about their treatment. Approximately 68 prisoners are supported each month across the prison with methadone support.

6.6.4 The Board is pleased to identify Coniston as a supportive environment where prisoners are empowered and given ownership of their recovery. The drug recovery team works to build prisoners' self-confidence; in addition, prisoners find support from others on their wing who have had similar experiences.

6.6.5 The Crossfit project has provided prisoners with a new positive focus – fitness. Prisoners learn about diet and their general health and wellbeing. The Board is impressed by the programme and continues to monitor the positive impact that it has on participants.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

6.7.1 The Board recognises the limited soft skills opportunities for prisoners during early 2022, due to Covid restrictions, and praises the efforts made to provide opportunities to connect prisoners with their families at that very challenging time. However, Story Time Dads remains an important means to support those links.

6.7.2 Large numbers of prisoners still need help with reading. Prisoners in need of support are identified through their key worker, and also through the educational assessment process during induction. During the year, a 0.6 full-time equivalent appointment was made to support the Shannon Trust.



## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

7.1.1 During the year, face-to-face class teaching resumed. However, at the beginning of the year there were limits on prisoner movement and mixing, which led to education provision being restricted to specific groups of prisoners from 'bubbles' on particular wings at any time. For part of the year, provision was restricted to part time, rather than full time. Data from August 2022 indicates very positive feedback from prisoners.

7.1.2 Earlier disruption to the education provision from 2020 had impacted on prisoners. Some prisoners completed educational programmes later than anticipated. The new ABC model for education was introduced in 2022-23.

7.1.3 The Board was pleased to see evening class opportunities. These included classes in music, cookery, arts and crafts, books and debating. Again, numbers were restricted due to Covid-19 restrictions early in the reporting year. And, on occasions, staff shortages led to classes being cancelled.

7.1.5 The library resumed normal working during 2022. The Board continues to be impressed by the stock of books and other materials and by its use by many prisoners.

### **7.2 Vocational training, work**

7.2.1 In early 2022 vocational training and work were affected by the pandemic. Areas such as waste management, kitchen work and wing cleaning were less impacted; however, the restricted regime did mean that separate wings and cohorts needed to be separated from one another in other work or training spaces. During the reporting year the prison was able to offer an increased number of workplaces within waste management, gardens and dry lining. All workshops were reopened as normal. But the Board regretted that many prisoners for part of the year (for example, Recycling Lives and the garden) had only half-day access to these opportunities.

7.2.2 Many of the vocational programmes (for example, Recycling Lives) continue to be much valued by prisoners. Examples exist of how prisoners were promised secure jobs and accommodation on release from prison. In the words of one prisoner: 'they give you hope and that's hard to find in jail'.

7.2.3 The Board recognises the difficulties created by the pandemic in providing the full range of employment opportunities within the prison, and was impressed by the extension of new provision in 2022/23. Employer engagement (e.g. with Booths) has led to increased opportunities for prisoners.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

7.3.1 The Board has identified a long-running problem between sentence planning and the provision of accredited offending behaviour and specified behavioural

programmes at the prison. On occasions, prisoners find themselves frustrated to find that progression has been blocked through a lack of available programmes. This leads to a mismatch between sentence plans and prison-provided programmes.

7.3.2 Some prisoners at the establishment have been recategorised from category D to category C. On occasion, concerns are raised by prisoners that there is insufficient information from the category D prison about the reasons for that transfer and opportunities to appeal about that decision.

7.3.3 There are 10 IPP prisoners in this resettlement prison. One such prisoner, in the CSU, explained the history of adjudications which limited his parole potential. His initial sentence was two years but he had already served 14 years. We consider that the Prison Service should seek to remove these anomalous situations.

7.3.4 Offender management unit (OMU) staff have run wing-based advice sessions. But during the year the Board became aware of staff and prisoners' frustrations due to delays in reporting by external probation service staff regarding parole and home detention curfews.

## **7.4 Family contact**

7.4.1 Data from August 2022 show that 58% of prisoners have children under the age of 18. It was pleasing during 2022/23 to see the resumption of a full social visit programme, including extra (monthly) family days. Whilst there was some social distancing in early 2022, this was not necessary later in the year. Social video visits continue to run for those families and individuals unable to visit the prison. Feedback on the online visits has been variable, as there have been problems in the use of the technology.

7.4.2 Partners of Prisoners runs the new family provider contract for visits. It has been proactive in the prison and caring and supportive outside the prison. It works collaboratively with prison staff in the visits process, including the crèche and the operation of family forums (to give families the chance to speak directly to senior governors and have their worries responded to). Men dress in civilian clothes and family photographs and goody bags are available.

7.4.3 It was pleasing to learn that the family and significant others self-audit in January 2023 was designated as 'fully met'.

7.4.4 The chaplaincy continues to support prisoners with family difficulties and bereavements; it works across all departments in the prison (see section 5.5). The Board is impressed by the arrangements made for prisoners to attend the funerals of close family members.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

7.5.1 During the year the Board has been alerted to cases where prisoners receive little or no support in their resettlement planning. Since normal activities have resumed this has been less of an issue. However, there remain a small number of prisoners who find that there is less support than they would like. Data from August 2022 indicates that half of the prisoners awaiting resettlement receive inadequate

support for welfare benefits and personal finance, and 45% receive no help in finding accommodation.

7.5.2 The employment hub seeks to match prisoners with external job opportunities. The manager deals with the final 12 weeks of the prisoner's term, and there is a close working relationship with prisoners, which is to be applauded. Sustainable resettlement should include employment for as many prisoners as possible.

7.5.3 Positive examples of resettlement programmes include Recycling Lives and Project 180 Crossfit programmes. With their commitment to providing accommodation, therapy and personal support on release, there is much demand from prisoners and a strong record of reducing reoffending.

7.5.4 Despite the prison's regional focus, some prisoners have been displaced from their home area. Whilst it is anticipated that they will be moved to prisons in their home regions, there can be long delays before such transfers take place.

## The work of the IMB

The Board has maintained a regular presence at the prison. However, the Board has lost members during the year. By the end of the reporting year there were just two experienced and trained members on the Board. This has impacted especially upon thematic monitoring.

Prisoners were able to contact the Board by paper-based applications or via a national freephone telephone service. The Board can respond to prisoners using the Email a Prisoner system, but rarely used this during 2022-23. Overall, the Board notes that the total number of applications received was 8.5% higher than that in the previous reporting year.

During the reporting year the Board received much support from prison staff. We wish to thank staff for their support at Board meetings and to address most issues raised in person by Board members. After some delay a new Board clerk was appointed in early 2022. And during 2022 Board members now have a timetabled slot at each monthly induction programme for new staff.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	4
Total number of visits to the establishment	97
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line	6
Total number of segregation reviews attended	5

### Applications to the IMB (including via the 0800 telephone line)

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Previous reporting year</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	6	13
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives, sanctions	8	20
C	Equality	6	16
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	6	14
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	3	3
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	19
F	Food and kitchens	6	10
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	30	33
H1	Property within this establishment	26	37
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	22	14
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	16	10
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorization	28	26
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	13	17
K	Transfers	34	30
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	26	36
	Total number of applications	236	256



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](https://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](mailto:imb@justice.gov.uk).