



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Pentonville

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

Published September 2023



Contents

Introductory sections 1 - 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	3
3. Key points	5
Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	9
5. Fair and humane treatment	13
6. Health and wellbeing	19
7. Progression and resettlement	23
The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	28
Applications to the IMB	28
Annex A	
List of service providers	29

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 Pentonville, on Caledonian Road in the London Borough of Islington, is a category B local prison, primarily serving the magistrates' and Crown Courts in north and east London. The four cell blocks remain much as they were when the prison was opened in 1842.

Pentonville holds category B and C male adults and young adults (YAs, aged 18 to 25). Ordinarily about a third of the adults held are on remand, but for this reporting

year this proportion had much increased, to approximately 75%¹. At the end of the reporting year, approximately 14 foreign nationals were held as detainees beyond the end of their sentence at the request of the Home Office.

The certified normal accommodation, which is the normal capacity of the prison as judged by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), is 909 prisoners. The operational capacity, which is the maximum number of prisoners it can hold without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime, is 1,205. At the end of the reporting year, there were approximately 1,140 prisoners (of whom 296 were YAs aged 18 to 25, comprising 26% of the prison population).

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*

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- There has been a notable success in the disruption of contraband in the prison. A new staff-searching regime, enhanced searching of prisoners on arrival, intelligence-led cell searching and scanning of letters for drugs all contributed to this. (4.5)
- At the start of the reporting year the Board had concerns about the reception and induction process, including prisoners arriving in cells lacking basic equipment, but there was improvement during the latter half of the year. (4.1)
- Vulnerable prisoners held on the Vulnerable Prisoners Unit (VPU) were not rigorously separated from the rest of the prison population, and their safety was potentially compromised. (4.2)
- The referral of prisoners for a Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP) (a tool for managing the more violent prisoners) dropped significantly this year, potentially increasing the risk of violence. (4.3)

Fair and humane treatment

- The antiquated and fragile fabric and facilities at Pentonville have not been well managed by Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL); this has a direct impact on every prisoner's experience and continues to be a serious concern for the IMB. (5.1)
- The prison has normalised an hour out of cell per day as the regime for many, and at weekends it is even less time. This is the result of a cautious emergence from Covid-19 restrictions, the challenge of big variations in staff numbers, and reliance on the argument that segregating the men for activities reduces the likelihood of violence. Pentonville needs to break out of this mindset, apply the imagination and energy evidenced in its flagship initiatives, and create an open and constructive regime for the majority. (6.5)
- Changes to the prison population placed greater demand and pressure on the Muslim chaplain in the Chaplaincy team. Any relief on increasing chaplain numbers depended on the outcome of a Ministry of Justice (MoJ) benchmarking exercise. (5.5)
- The key work scheme, where prison officers are allocated to all prisoners to work on a one-to-one basis, has been a victim of staff shortages and the priority of security operations. It was virtually extinguished by December. (5.3)

- Problems with prisoner property on transfer and within the prison continued, causing a huge amount of stress and frustration for prisoners and taking up a lot of staff time. (5.8)

Health and wellbeing

- Most of the issues raised by prisoners with the IMB about healthcare were to do with the timing of their next appointments. Introduction of a new application system meant that prisoners would receive a response within five days acknowledging receipt and indicating when they could expect to be seen. (6.1)
- In a major new approach to supporting prisoners, a Neurodiversity Unit was established on one landing for prisoners with a range of neurodevelopmental and neurological disorders. The men on the unit were calmer, and there was evidence of improved outcomes, such as reduction in violence and self-harm. The benefits of the unit were felt throughout the prison. (6.3)
- Up to 60 prisoners benefited from the drug-free wing, signing up to voluntary drug testing and a behaviour compact in return for extra privileges. Whilst on the wing, prisoners could participate in a recovery programme that has led to successful outcomes for prisoners on release. (6.6)

Progression and resettlement

- Low attendance at education and activities was a persistent problem. Only 65% of the population were engaged in an activity at the end of the year (up from 50% in July). (7.1)
- Many prisoners complained to the IMB about communication with the Offender Management Unit (OMU). There was no system in place for logging applications, and a processing backlog contributed to their frustration. (7.3)
- The prison did a lot to support young adults held in Pentonville. The Time4Change programme is a particularly impressive initiative. However, with so few dedicated facilities, the IMB remains concerned that young adults continue to be held in Pentonville at all. (7.3)
- An unprecedented 75% of prisoners in Pentonville were on remand. The resettlement preparations for release of many of these prisoners is minimal. The majority were released direct from court without any release plan, after long periods waiting for their court appearance. (7.5)

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- What measures is the Minister planning to take to reduce overcrowding in the prison system, in light of the fact that the prison estate nationally is almost at capacity and projected to increase still further before additional spaces become available under the Government's prison building programme?
- There remains a critical gap in the provision of resettlement services to remand prisoners. Will the Minister commit to provide more funding to HMPPS to allow for an increase in the provision of resettlement services within establishments with a high remand population, given the crucial importance of these to reducing reoffending?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Will HMPPS give assurance that the population of Pentonville will not be increased beyond the Operational Capacity of 1,205 notwithstanding increasing population pressures across the prison estate?
- When will action be taken to review the performance by GFSL of its contractual obligations? Its continued poor performance means that conditions for prisoners are neither decent nor humane, and are becoming increasingly less so every year.
- A move from full to part-time education and activities during the reporting year increased the number of spaces available to the prisoners. However, for the rest of the day they only have an hour out of cell, and those not engaged in education or activities spend 23 hours a day locked up with nothing to do. Will HMPPS commit to providing the necessary resources for the Governor to provide sufficient full-time purposeful activity spaces for the population?
- Will HMPPS commit to the expediting of the transfer of sentenced vulnerable prisoners from Pentonville to other more suitable establishments, where they can be kept safe and have access to offence-based courses?
- The new Prisoners' Property Framework seems to have had no noticeable positive impact on the transfer of property between prisons. Will HMPPS commit to a meaningful, evidence-based review of the Framework?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Will you commit to a detailed review of the structure of the regime in order to provide more time out of cell for those prisoners who do not attend either education or activities?
- Will you undertake a comprehensive overhaul of property systems at Pentonville to ensure that they work effectively to enable prisoners to receive

their property in a timely manner (and to avoid the unnecessary waste of staff time)?

- Will you commit to, at a minimum, ensuring that a system is established whereby applications to the Offender Management Unit are logged electronically and an acknowledgement slip sent to prisoners, in the same way as has been done in healthcare?
- What additional measures will you take to ensure the safety and access to activities of vulnerable prisoners who, due to a lack of space on the vulnerable prisoners' unit, are housed separately?
- Will you commit to renewing the focus on key work to ensure that all prisoners can benefit from the valuable personal contact that this brings?

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Pentonville is a busy local prison with around 60 movements into and 60 out of the prison each day. These were to and from courts, discharges and transfers. Over the course of the reporting year, the population was made up of approximately 75% remand prisoners.

The reporting year began with reception and induction being an area of concern with inexperienced staff, long delays in processing arrivals from reception to cells and first night cells lacking basic equipment. However, much work has been focused on improving both Reception and Early Days in Custody (EDIC) and there was evidence of positive improvements in both areas in the last half of the year. For example:

Arrival. The Serco vans (that move prisoners) generally arrived on time, with reception informed in advance. Staff have been observed as sympathetic and clear when receiving the new prisoners. The process of moving the men through reception and into the holding room was efficient, with staff displaying politeness and respect. The IMB was pleased to see privacy screens erected in the interview room, having highlighted the lack of privacy in several previous Annual Reports. The prison orderlies, together with Listeners, prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners (4.2), offered a friendly presence, providing the new arrivals with their kit and welcome booklet. There was also a national induction booklet available in multiple languages.

First Night. The condition of cells for new arrivals had generally improved with the emphasis being on providing graffiti-free, clean and fully equipped cells. First-time prisoners were checked throughout their first night. Induction passports were introduced, containing a record of a prisoner's first few days.

Induction. The prison induction session had improved to become more accessible. These sessions were led by a Listener, insiders (selected prisoners who help other prisoners with their administration), and an officer. An induction video was shown introducing key departments and agencies. A Learning and Skills induction takes place on day two, during which the men take the Basic Skills Assessment (BSA). Although most men completed the induction process, a shortage of space in the prison kept them on the induction wing for longer than was necessary. This prevented them from starting on meaningful activities in either education or skills.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

One prisoner sadly died in this reporting year. Last reporting year there were three deaths, two of which have since been confirmed as due to natural causes, and investigation reports, including clinical reviews, were published by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO); the recommendations have been implemented. The PPO recommended that the Governor should ensure a prisoner's relatives are told

promptly if he is taken to hospital, or if his condition deteriorates. Other recommendations were about healthcare processes.

We drew attention last year to the backlog of inquests and incomplete PPO investigation reports, which meant lessons had not yet been learned. Some investigations were four years old. There remained a backlog of seven inquests, with four having scheduled dates by the end of the reporting year.

Regular safety meetings were held (a significant improvement on the previous reporting year) and were attended by Listeners and prisoner representatives from February (for the first time since Covid-19). Improved analysis of safety data was available to prison management and to the IMB. Another positive development was the holding of a fortnightly Safety Intervention Meeting at which particularly complex prisoners were reviewed and discussed, including self-isolators and those refusing food.

Self-harm had reduced by 16% on the previous year, with 487 recorded incidents. This number included individual prisoners who self-harmed multiple times. From October onwards, the number of incidents per month was consistently below the average for the year. There was no obvious pattern in the reasons cited for self-harm, the recording of which was much improved from July after the Safety Governor reminded staff of its importance.

The number of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) case management documents for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm (650) was almost unchanged from the previous reporting year. Half of these were opened in reception or on the induction wing. Single case management of ACCTs was introduced in July, providing more consistency and continuity of cases. Safer Custody increased its focus on ACCT assurance with additional training and support for staff, and additional ACCT assessors were trained. When IMB members observed ACCT reviews, they were found to be well handled and thorough with good write-ups of reviews on prisoner records. However, this was not always reflected in the quality of the ACCT documentation itself, which was often incomplete.

Prisoners in crisis could ask to talk to a Listener. The average number of Listener sessions per month was 74, a significant drop on 251 last year. An average of 20 Listeners were available through the year. The top five concerns expressed were family, mental health, first time in prison, problems with staff/regime and legal issues. Prisoners could also call the Samaritans from their in-cell telephones. Data has very recently become available about prisoners' use of this service, which should inform discussion and better understanding of how troubled prisoners want to use the different services available. Listeners drew attention to the needs of foreign national prisoners for language interpreters.

There was no consistent improvement across the prison in cell bell response times. Only two wings achieved the target of at least 80% of bells being answered within the required five minutes, with one wing seeing an average of only 56% of calls responded to within the target.

Safer Custody had a significant remit over violence and self-harm, including a Violence Reduction Officer who investigated daily incidents. The IMB referred prisoners who felt unsafe or were unable to resolve concerns with landing staff, and forwarded applications it received which were of concern. The Safer Custody Hotline was a contact point for members of the public to raise concerns about prisoners in Pentonville.

Vulnerable Prisoners' Unit (VPU). The IMB has concluded that rigorous separation of vulnerable prisoners (VPs) no longer operates in Pentonville and that safety was potentially compromised. VPs were removed from association with other prisoners under prison rules where it was necessary for their own protection or for maintenance of good order. The VP population during the year was 75-80 prisoners per week; most were awaiting trial or sentence for sexual offences. The designated VPU held only 45 prisoners and, for several years, around 15-20 VPs have been placed on an adjacent landing. This landing has a mixed population, as well as a pharmacy dispensing hatch visited by a wider population. During the reporting year a further 15-20 VPs were held on the induction wing while they waited for a place in the VPU to become available. Induction wing staff were careful to cohort VPs together for cell locations, showers and exercise, but as these men occupied only part of a landing they could be easily identified and potentially physically and verbally abused; some told the IMB they felt unsafe. Opportunities for education and activities for VPs held on the VPU are very limited; the cohorting of VPs on the induction wing for safety limited their opportunities still further.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Violence decreased by 12% from the last reporting year with an average of 39 incidents per month. The number of serious assaults on prisoners (40) increased by 25% on the previous year, while the number of serious assaults on staff (16) stayed the same. Levels of violence varied considerably, with spikes of 59 and 53 incidents in October and November, possibly linked to the reduction in contraband due to increased staff searching from October. This number reduced to 23 in January before increasing steadily over the remainder of the reporting year.

CSIP. The number of referrals of prisoners for a CSIP dropped significantly, from 73 per month in the last six months of the previous reporting year to 20 a month across this reporting year. This was discouraging, particularly as YAs constituted the majority of referrals and therefore stood to gain the most from this intervention, and because it reversed last year's positive developments in this area. The reduction was at least partly as a result of prisoners only being referred if they were involved in multiple violent incidents. In safety meetings it was emphasised that staff should be referring individuals to CSIP, but there had been no visible upward trend by the end of the reporting year.

Gang issues. Pentonville has more gangs than any other London prison and prisoners bring their gang affiliations inside with them, which remains an ongoing challenge. The prison was once again seeking external support for specialist help but had no contract during this reporting year. Prisoners reported that gang issues were not being picked up in reception and that this was causing problems on the wings. Regular security meetings were held at which detailed intelligence data was

shared, but there was no noticeable reduction in the proportion of gang-related assaults. It was often a struggle to house men who wanted to avoid violence but had 'non-associates' on most wings, or to accommodate repeat perpetrators of violence so they did not cross paths with rivals. Occasionally the only solution was a transfer to another prison.

4.4 Use of force (UoF)

The IMB has no significant concerns relating to UoF in Pentonville. De-escalation was encouraged and used to prevent UoF having to be instigated or used during an incident. The IMB observed officers gauging a prisoner's compliance during incidents to ascertain if the situations could be resolved without UoF.

There were 798 instances of UoF over the reporting year (compared to 646 last year). Consistently the most common reasons were non-compliance, prisoner violence, searches, and assaults on members of staff. Of the instances over the year, 527 involved the use of full control and restraint, while 271 involved a mixture of personal safety and guiding holds. In 77% of the incidents in the first three months of 2023, they involved prisoners who already had a violence alert on their prison records.

There was evidence of increased but somewhat inconsistent use of body-worn video cameras (BWVC), and CCTV and BWVC footage were regularly examined. Practices were also examined and follow-up developmental advice, guidance or praise provided to staff as appropriate. In addition there were monthly UoF meetings which scrutinised UoF data. Management of rival gang populations in conjunction with security moves helped manage incidents of violence and the need to use force.

Use of SPEAR (a personal self-defence method), PAVA (an incapacitant spray) and control and restraint training was ongoing. The training was observed to be of high quality and professionally delivered. PAVA spray was not used during the reporting year.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The disruption of contraband being brought into the prison was a notable success. In October a new staff searching regime was implemented and all staff and visitors were searched on entry. Staff were prohibited from leaving the prison at certain times of day, and vaping shelters were installed within the prison grounds. The effect of this was quickly noticeable with a huge reduction in the smell of cannabis throughout the prison. Enhanced searching of prisoners on arrival, and using body scanners and X-ray machines in reception, enabled items concealed internally to be detected. Enhanced searching of visitors prior to visits (including the use of detection dogs) and the monitoring of CCTV also reduced the bringing in and passing of contraband. Cell searching continued to be intelligence-led. The impact of the increased searching regime was evidenced by the reduction in drug finds from a high of 72 in September to 15 in March. The number of mobile phone finds stayed relatively constant.

Throw-overs and drones remained an issue, although less so due to staff perimeter patrols and police action outside the prison. The use of letters to convey drugs continued, and there was some increase in finds after the searching was enhanced. All letters were put through a scanning machine to detect drugs, and a new system for identifying whether Rule 39 letters (privileged legal correspondence) were genuine was implemented.

Mandatory drug testing, an indicator of the prevalence of drugs in the prison, continued throughout the year. Men on the drug-free wing and wing workers were tested regularly. In the first three months of the reporting year, around 25-30% of prisoners failed MDT. Following the implementation of enhanced staff searching in October, this reduced to 15% and remained around that level for the remainder of the reporting year.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Lack of HMPPS capital to run improvement projects left Pentonville in its familiar decrepit state. Over the course of the reporting year, the unlock figure rose by nearly 100 to just under 1,150 prisoners. This was in a prison designed in Victorian times to house 520 men, with no significant increase in cell accommodation since then. This so alarmed the IMB that they sent a letter to the Secretary of State on 12 December 2022. Men were crammed, almost always in pairs, into cells measuring 12 x 8 feet, with bunk beds, a single desk and a chair and a toilet, often unscreened, inches away from where each prisoner and their cellmate ate, slept and spent much of their day. The lack of privacy alone could not be described as decent or humane.

Antiquated heating and plumbing systems, urgently in need of complete renovation, were the focus of the majority of complaints to the IMB about living conditions. Heating was provided by a number of boilers, variously powered by gas, oil and electricity, which failed, in some cases for weeks, in different parts of the establishment. Prisoners relied on extra blankets and two pairs of trousers, and had to tolerate cold or tepid showers. Electrical wiring in cells could not support mobile heaters. Many of the showers were mouldy, smelly, with doors which did not shut properly and infested with biting flies. A programme to replace cell windows and in-cell smoke detectors continued. The main sports hall was out of action for the whole reporting year due to a rotten floor. This had an impact on opportunities for exercise. The roof of the mosque continued to leak.

On the positive side, two landings on the biggest wing were refurbished and much improved, and landings and common areas throughout the prison were generally clean and bright due to concerted efforts by staff and effective teams of wing cleaners. The CRED (Clean, Rehabilitative, Enabling and Decent) team continued to work on individual cells.

All prisoners with limited mobility had a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). These plans were the responsibility of the equalities team and assessments were carried out by wing staff, with a database available on each wing and with the prison's Orderly Officer. At the end of the reporting year there were approximately

12-13 men on PEEPs and, wherever possible, these men were located at flat level. The lack of lifts for prisoners or staff with mobility problems leads the IMB to question whether Pentonville is fit to house such prisoners. No evacuation drills were carried out during the year due to the prison's slow recovery from Covid-19.

The GFSL contract continued to disappoint with heating, water, repair (such as lifts) and vermin problems persisting. In the heatwave of July, hot water flowing through pipes in cells on some of the higher landings caused intolerable temperatures, and there were further incidents of heating coming on at night during the hot summer months. Lack of hot water, heating and low water pressure were reported regularly, due to the antiquated system, which does not allow for cells to be isolated when repairs are being carried out (often after damage caused by prisoners). There were at least two occasions when drain blockages caused sewage to erupt through a manhole at lower ground level, causing extremely unpleasant conditions in the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) (5.2) and an adjacent newly refurbished wing.

The lift which services the VPU remained out of action. Some of the older, frail men had to navigate flights of narrow metal stairs to breathe fresh air; wing staff had to carry some of them on a chair, impossible with larger prisoners. This was a safety risk for both prisoners and staff, and an accident waiting to happen.

There were repeated reports and sightings of cockroaches, mice and pigeons, in spite of regular visits by Rentokil (a GFSL subcontractor). Problems were worse on the lower landings, attributable in part to adjacent outdoor gullies constantly full of rubbish and to the general dilapidation of the ancient buildings. The CSU was almost continually infested with rodents and cockroaches.

Food. In the week when food price inflation hit 17%, the Governor received instructions to reduce the overspend of 20p per prisoner per day (from an already very challenging £2.56). Some men complained that they were fed meagre portions and many were feeding themselves through their canteen spend (only available for men with funds). Kitchen management still struggled with broken equipment and escalating food costs. An audit by the Regional Catering Advisor was generally positive and the quality of the food was reasonable. There were approximately four complaints per month to kitchen management about the food and most were about limited portions. A portion control chart was in every servery, and catering supervisors did regular wing visits during service time to monitor and advise servery workers. The Board observed that Muslim prisoners were well taken care of during Ramadan.

5.2 Segregation

Pentonville's CSU is a busy, high-pressure wing that is small relative to the population, with only 11 cells. During the reporting year, two or more cells were usually out of action either due to heating or plumbing issues or to prisoners flooding their cells. There was only one shower room, which was in desperate need of refurbishment. There were 370 occasions where men were held in regular segregation cells over the reporting year. The average length of stay was five days. There were two 42-day reviews which required sanction by the Prison Group Director (PGD). Special accommodation (unfurnished) cells were only used twice

during the reporting year and the IMB was informed. All UoF incidents in the CSU were scrutinised by the prison.

Despite incidents of violent or threatening behaviour, the IMB observed staff upholding a consistent, professional level of care to provide a safe and secure environment for the men. Daily visits by the Chaplaincy, the duty governor, mental health and healthcare staff were maintained; the IMB visited the CSU multiple times each week. CSU reviews were observed to be fair, detailed and thoughtfully managed, with a reintegration plan now included as standard practice.

Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings were held quarterly to ensure that the Prison Service Order on segregation was implemented and adhered to throughout the prison, and that the training and educational needs of staff were reviewed.

Adjudications were held nearly every day for offences committed by prisoners, such as possession of contraband, assaults, fights or disobeying a lawful order. The Deputy Governor conducted regular assurance checks on adjudication awards and there was a quarterly adjudication standardisation group which reviewed the data and identified any emerging themes or variations. The total number of adjudications during this period was 2,893.

Over the past year, police referrals increased by 23% as all phone finds and assaults on staff were referred to them. Despite the increase, fewer cases were taken forward by the police (reducing the deterrent effect), so that many prisoners had either been transferred or released by the time it returned to the adjudication process. All Independent Adjudication sessions were by video and were limited to 15 per month, representing a huge reduction on the weekly sessions that were held before Covid-19. There was a lack of confidence by governors in the value of referrals to both IA and the police as it left no proportionate adjudication awards for phone, weapon or drug finds, and prisoners were aware of this.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

Staff numbers fluctuated throughout the reporting year, affecting relationships between staff and prisoners, with frustration at curtailment of the regime when staff numbers were low. Communications over the prison TV channel warning of rolling lockdowns due to staff shortages were helpful. The IMB observed many instances of good relationships between staff and prisoners, with staff displaying good humour, patience and tolerance in challenging circumstances, and prisoners working helpfully alongside staff. However, a lack of experienced staff had an impact. At the end of 2022, 60% of Band 3 (basic grade) staff had been in post for under three years. Prisoners expressed frustration at newer staff not understanding the system or having the confidence to unlock appropriately, being reluctant to engage with prisoners or not having the skills required to de-escalate tensions. Over the course of the reporting year, there was some evidence of improvement in the retention rate of staff. The Governor sought to boost staff morale, with recognition of long service and a system of regular nominations for awards.

The Pentonville Prisoner Platform was launched in June to replace the prison council as a communication channel between staff and prisoners (this followed the termination of the contract with User Voice, a charity which supports prisoners to get their voices heard). After an interrupted start, a well-organised system was in place in the New Year. Prisoner representatives from each wing attended a monthly meeting, with interim meetings to set the agenda, based on concerns raised by prisoners. Commitment from management was evidenced by good attendance at a senior level, and positive, open and good-natured discussion was observed by the IMB at the meetings.

Key work had been introduced nationally with much publicity in 2018 as part of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model. Under this scheme, each prison officer was meant to undertake key work with around five to six people in prison on a one-to-one basis, in addition to their other duties. The key worker scheme was intended to allow prison officers more time and flexibility to provide prisoners with the best chance of engaging in rehabilitation.

A major initiative to re-establish key work was launched in July, with a target of one in three prisoners seeing a key worker once a month. Figures rose steadily, with 80% of prisoners having had a session by September. However, staff shortages and the redeployment of staff to security operations caused a massive drop in numbers, so that it was virtually extinguished by December. Where there was a choice between providing a minimum regime and maintaining key work, one of these functions had to give way. There was evidence of some key working continuing since, but the quality of key work reports varied enormously, as did the frequency. Despite the great fanfare on its introduction, key work seemed to have run out of steam.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The population in Pentonville was very diverse in age, ethnicity and faith: 32% of the population identified as black and 14% as Asian; Christians comprised 43% of the population and 37% were Muslim. Young adults (18-25 years) made up 26% of the population, and 6% were over 55 years old. There were also disabled and transgender prisoners.

There was a disproportionate use of restraints on black prisoners, on Muslim prisoners and on young adults (UoF statistics, May 2022 and February 2023). It remains the IMB's view that more research into disproportionality is necessary.

The equality officer left at the end of February 2023, leaving no one with day-to-day oversight to the end of the reporting year. Only three Equality and Diversity meetings took place during the reporting year (when they should have been held monthly). There was a backlog of Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms at the end of the reporting year and prisoners had to wait for months to get a final reply.

However, there were many instances of good practice observed by the IMB, including:

- opening of the Neurodiversity Unit

- celebration of Black History Month, with special menus, thematic distraction packs, and speakers' events for staff and prisoners
- awareness-raising events, including Neurodiversity Week and LGBT Month
- celebration of religious festivals organised by the Chaplaincy and very well supported by the kitchen
- completion of the Equality Representatives' Course (led by the Zahid Mubarek Trust) by eight prisoners
- generally good support of transgender prisoners
- the creation of a Disability Forum
- more privacy in the reception area to help with more accurate declaration of protected characteristics from new arrivals
- translation of a Pentonville information booklet into eight languages.

Many concerns remained, including the fact that older prisoners particularly suffered from the poor and cold accommodation and that foreign nationals were not always getting the support that they needed. The foreign nationals' workshops had not been revived since Covid-19. On several occasions, the IMB came across foreign nationals who did not speak English and needed more support.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The Chaplaincy team was made up of full-time Anglican and Catholic chaplains and a full-time Muslim chaplain, each supported by part-time staff. Orthodox, Hindu, Buddhist, Quaker, Sikh, Jewish and Humanist faiths were served by sessional and voluntary members. There was a bereavement counsellor, a non-religious member and some 72 key-holding volunteers who assisted with running courses and services, acting as ACCT assessors, Official Prison Visitors, mentors and bereavement counsellors. Gradual changes in the prison population meant that staffing no longer reflected the prison population and the Muslim chaplain was overstretched (another full-time Muslim chaplain could not be recruited until the completion of an MoJ benchmark exercise for chaplains). The team worked across faiths where they were able, and external help was called in where needed.

Full collective worship for all faiths resumed in late July for the first time since Covid-19 (Friday prayers required multiple services because of the numbers). Pentonville was one of the first prisons to achieve this. Due to close working between the Chaplaincy and intelligence analysts, only one incident of violence had occurred, where a prisoner who was not on the relevant list had been unlocked in error. Wing-based services were provided for those who could not safely mix. Prisoners met in groups, including for Islamic and Qur'an studies, a Sikh class, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian study. On average some 350 prisoners attended a service or Chaplaincy

group each week. In addition, good use was made of in-cell TV channels and faith-based publications for weekly teaching and celebration of significant festivals.

The team maintained a visible presence, with daily visits to healthcare and the CSU, although changes in the timetabling of segregation reviews had led to less regular attendance. All prisoners on an ACCT were visited by a chaplain weekly, and members of the team acted as ACCT assessors and attended reviews. Prisoners who required additional support were put on a Daily Visitors List, and support was provided to those with sick or dying relatives and with attendance at funerals.

The prison has strong links with local parishes and charities, some of whom provided gifts to mark religious festivals. London City Mission helped link prisoners to churches on their release, providing through-the-gate support. Chaplains visited all prisoners in their final month, offering practical support through the Signpost Service (developed by a Chaplaincy volunteer) which is tailor-made and gives details of organisations that might be able to support them on release. Fifty-one prisoners completed the Sycamore Tree Restorative Justice course, accredited by Gateway Qualifications and which can lead to a level 1 or 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ) if all elements are completed.

Support was given to staff, with the managing chaplain leading a Care Support Team to communicate with members who were sick and a TRiM (Trauma-Related Incidence Management) team. Chaplaincy staff and volunteers brought in microwaveable meals for staff who were struggling with the cost of living.

5.6 Incentives schemes

The incentives scheme that had been partially suspended by HMPPS in May 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 was fully restored in May. The prison implemented a new incentives policy, and prisoners could expect a more effective system to encourage decency and good behaviour. The IMB welcomed the return of the scheme. One aspect of the scheme is the greater number of visits that enhanced prisoners can receive. Previously, the number of visits had been controlled for all prisoners, but post-Covid-19 this has not been the case. This was regarded as a valued privilege by enhanced prisoners, but could not be a feature of the scheme during the reporting year because every prisoner was entitled to it.

5.7 Complaints

Performance in responding to complaints on time continued to improve and reached 93% in March. Prolific complainers sometimes skewed the monthly picture, e.g. of 197 complaints in February, 50 were submitted by seven prisoners. Complaints about money, which may include prisoner pay, canteen refunds and telephone accounts, increased significantly, perhaps reflecting the cost of living squeeze for prisoners. These overtook complaints about property (76) in the last quarter of the year. There was a close focus on the quality, as well as speed of action, on all complaints about staff, with the complaints and responses included in the monthly analysis for the Head of Business Assurance.

5.8 Property

Prisoners continued to write regularly to the IMB to ask for help in obtaining parcels posted in and in locating bags of property following them from other prisons when transferred. Information on what was permitted to be posted in/brought from other prisons was available in induction, on in-cell TV and from Insiders, but it was simply not clear enough (especially around electronic items), and the rules caused confusion, frustration and distress. When parcels did reach the prison they were usually held up for several weeks waiting for essential checks by security. Once a parcel was checked and cleared, how quickly it could be delivered to the prisoner depended on whether the property room was staffed on a Sunday, as this was the only day of the week on which it was possible for delivery to happen.

A new Prisoners' Property Framework was implemented by HMPPS on 5 September 2022. The IMB's view is that it has not made any discernible difference to the efficiency of the system for getting property to prisoners as quickly as possible.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Healthcare services in Pentonville were on a slowly improving trend from the previous year. The NHS-wide programme New Models of Care was launched in January and staffing for this was near complete towards the end of the reporting year. There was a change in management in December with a new Head of Healthcare who was made permanent.

Pentonville is rightly proud of its 22-bed inpatient unit, meant to serve prisoners with mental health or other complicated health issues 24 hours a day. The inpatient unit was well managed throughout most of the reporting year. The IMB felt that committed healthcare staff managed complex prisoners with understanding and good care, although there was sometimes a shortage of experienced officers to support them. Staff provided a programme of varied activities, and the gym – unused since the end of lockdown – was back in service. Prisoners cared for in this unit generally expressed satisfaction with their care to IMB members who checked on them regularly.

A new system was implemented to ensure that men received a response to healthcare applications within five days (they did not always get appointments that quickly, but they were made aware of how long they were likely to need to wait). In general, waiting times were shorter than the wait in the community, as men could normally see a GP within five days.

Prisoner healthcare-related applications to the IMB decreased from the previous reporting year. The issues raised were mostly from prisoners concerned about the timing of their next appointment. Healthcare staff managed and monitored complaints, looking for patterns and managing any investigations. Complaints came down this reporting year and engagement with prisoners gradually improved.

An innovation this past year was a TB screening van (in collaboration with University College London Hospital) with 250 men attending. Also included was screening for blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis and HIV. The men were given small amounts of phone credit to encourage attendance. There was no Care Quality Commission assessment carried out during the reporting year. Patient forums began in January and were held bimonthly, another welcome development in communications between healthcare and prisoners.

6.2 Physical healthcare

A team of GPs, nurses and pharmacists ran a range of clinics and pharmacy services, both in the healthcare unit and on the wings. All treatment rooms were refurbished in autumn 2022. Pentonville healthcare staffing improved this reporting year with 14 new permanent appointments since October. There were several part-time GPs, bringing continuity. However, agency nurses remained a necessity, making up about 50% of nursing staff. Even in this reporting year, prison systems continued to be affected by Covid-19, with staff shortages on both sides. Despite this, healthcare managed its responsibilities well. Healthcare clinic waiting rooms continued to be only filled by men from one wing at a time and this cohorting made appointments more challenging throughout the reporting year. The relationship between the prison and healthcare remained reasonably good. One consistent challenge was a shortage of healthcare staff contributing to segregation and ACCT reviews. The CSU struggled to locate healthcare staff to attend reviews, and the presiding governor would sometimes have to reschedule them.

Did Not Attend. The percentage of prisoners not attending health appointments had significantly reduced from the previous year, possibly the result of better communications with prisoners over appointments.

Reception. The New Models of Care, which began in January, focuses on this unit to a greater extent. In reception, new prisoners were screened by nurses and a GP, who were available beyond 5.30pm each day. Most evenings saw the healthcare staff leaving by 9.30pm. Also, a new healthcare team was located in the induction wing. The new induction video introduced the healthcare available at the prison to new arrivals.

Pharmacy. Pharmacy cover, a reliable service, was made available seven days a week from May and was extended to 8.30pm in December. Little in-possession medication meant that men had to attend the pharmacy hatch and there were often long queues.

6.3 Mental health

The mental health contractor, Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust, operated as a subcontract to the Practice Plus Group and were led by the head of healthcare. The number of patients awaiting mental health interventions had reduced by the end of the reporting year. Assessment referrals ranged from 50 to 189 per month, with a large increasing trend under the new management.

Enhanced support service (ESS). The ESS focused on a small number of very troubled prisoners (up to 12), often those with personality disorders. The team of three included an officer, a mental health nurse and a forensic psychologist. However, staff absence impeded the service this reporting year. Agency staff covered for a short period and a permanent appointment was only made in February. As few as three men were covered, but this had risen to 10 by the end of March. The men received 12 sessions over 12 weeks to stabilise their behaviour. Transfers or the need for additional support required ESS to be flexible, and staff liaised with Offender Personality Disorder Pathway units across the prison estate to enable continuity.

Wellbeing Centre. The Wellbeing Centre is a dedicated occupational therapy unit staffed by support workers and occupational therapists with a daily schedule of group work. The centre supplied anxiety workshops, communication support, help with emotional needs and ADHD, and occupational work, such as art. At the end of the reporting year, a pottery tutor had begun work. Over the reporting year, a welcome development was that the prison began to recognise the therapeutic value of the centre and men were brought down as a priority. This was a welcome improvement, but the centre remained underutilised.

The Neurodiversity Unit. Pentonville was justly proud of a major new approach to support prisoners who suffered from a range of neurodevelopmental and neurological disorders (such as speech and communication difficulties, ADHD and challenging behaviours) and who particularly struggled with living on the wings. These men were also more likely to take out their stress by self-harming. The aim of the unit was to care for men who did not fit in on the larger wings, as the staff there did not have adequate time to understand their needs. The unit accommodated up to 50 men and 18 of the cells were singles (suited for men who were likely to be anxious). Requiring healthcare and prison staff to work closely together, the staff managed to create a supportive environment within the strict prison regime. The staff were specially selected and trained to provide a calm, structured and quiet atmosphere, with additional support and staff-to-prisoner ratios that were better than on other wings. The layout was unique in the prison as the staff office was located in the middle of the landing in a pod with windows all round, so the men knew that staff were close by. Therapists and specialists in ADHD and other neurodevelopmental and neurological disorders from the Wellbeing Centre provided sessions. A therapy dog and handler visited the unit regularly and very much benefited the men. The men on the unit were certainly calmer and there was early evidence of improved outcomes, such as a reduction in violence and self-harm. There was also evidence that the benefits were felt throughout the prison.

6.4 Social care

Social support at Pentonville was especially complex given the fabric of a prison that was not adapted to the needs of prisoners with mobility issues. The Practice Plus social care team were managed by a social care assistant who carried out assessments and provided reasonable adjustments and care for prisoners unable to care for themselves adequately. They were also referred to other professionals, if required.

With an increasing number of older prisoners, a paid care Buddy scheme was organised by the equality officer and provided support throughout the year. The Buddies were identified and trained by landing staff and the social care team, and supported up to two prisoners each. Aside from occasional complaints about pay issues, the scheme was seen to be mutually beneficial.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

The prison had been slow to react post Covid-19, and time out of cell remained poor for most prisoners. Those who did not have a job or attend education may only have been out of their cell for one hour a day and even less over the weekend. This was because of low staffing levels due to sickness, including Covid-19, train strikes, the redeployment of officers on to staff searching duties, attending to violence and detached duties. There were three-day lockdowns for some prisoners, which led to some men having to choose between education or exercise.

Access to indoor exercise was curtailed this year by the closure of the sports hall shared by two adjoining wings. A flood in February was reportedly so badly handled by GFSL that it led to unusable flooring, and the hall has remained out of use. All team sports for prisoners have stopped as these are not permitted outside.

However, the indoor gyms with cardio and training equipment remained open, although staffing pressures meant that, at times, fewer sessions were available to the smaller wings. In theory, each prisoner should have been invited to attend the gym twice a week but this appeared to have been patchy. Since Covid-19, the outside gym equipment can be used by prisoners individually but it is no longer used for group classes.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Prisoners on Pentonville's drug-free wing, which had 60 places, signed up to a voluntary drug testing and behaviour compact. Any breach and they were off the wing, losing privileges such as cooking their own meals and eating together.

A notable success this year was the six-week recovery programme on the wing, which was influenced by ex-prisoners who took part in the pilot, attended rehabilitation on release and were volunteer drug workers in the community; they returned to share their stories at the graduation.

Pentonville supported a number of other prisons which were planning to set up a drug-free wing, with visits and advice on good practice and what to avoid. For Pentonville, it is hoped that the pay-off will be to progress prisoners to drug-free units in other prisons so the men are able to continue the work they have begun in tackling their addiction.

Around 400 prisoners engaged with rehabilitation support. The staffing level of the Substance Misuse Team improved and changes to the healthcare contract meant the team was available during evenings, including in reception, and at weekends. Group work and individual sessions were delivered on all wings.

A new three-week Roads to Recovery programme was piloted on the prison's largest wing. The aim was to help prisoners understand their substance use and wider influences, including mental health and offending. Twelve prisoners graduated, reporting that participation helped them understand how they could cut down on their drug use or stop altogether. Family members were invited to the graduation.

The member of staff who led work on strategy and setting up the drug-free wing received a Butler Trust Award.

6.7 Soft skills

Soft skills included a variety of education courses, notably in the creative arts, drama and philosophy. The education staff ran celebration-of-success events and graduation ceremonies for the criminology course, which ran in conjunction with the University of Westminster, on which prisoners, officers and students worked together. A session called 'Prison Law', where an Old Bailey judge and barristers enabled prisoners to debate, challenge and express their point of view in a professional way, exemplified the approach.

The Wellbeing Centre, courses run by the Chaplaincy and the programmes for Listeners, Insiders and Red Band prisoners all provided opportunities for prisoners to develop soft skills (a Red Band prisoner wears a red T-shirt to delineate his higher responsibility job with enhanced pay and time out of cell). Prisoners with positions of responsibility were observed taking them seriously and relishing the opportunities given. Prisoners on the Neurodiversity Unit led sessions for their peers (such as keep fit), which gave them the chance to develop leadership skills.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The education programme in Pentonville was a great resource but remained underused. Despite a sharper focus, at the end of the reporting year only 65% of the population were engaged in an activity at any one time (up from 50% in July). In addition, the majority of education and other purposeful activity spaces had changed from being full-time to part-time during the reporting year.

There was value in having a new and energetic governor responsible for education, skills and work, who helped persuade staff to recognise the importance of prisoners being unlocked for and encouraged to attend activities. A well-organised workshop attended by key stakeholders, including some prisoners, raised awareness of what was available within the prison and tried to address barriers to attendance. A curriculum review led to all courses becoming modular, which suited the high remand population.

More coordinated efforts from prison and education staff had resulted in increased numbers attending their basic skills assessment (BSA) while on the induction wing,

but not all prisoners consented to take part. In the past this refusal would not have resulted in any penalties, but this year the Governor agreed that penalties should be given to refusers and their access to gym stopped.

The senior librarian and her staff worked hard to increase access to the library, which rose from just one wing in April to all by October. However, numbers were not as high as they could have been, in part because of the variance in regime day by day: if a prisoner had to make a choice between showers and fresh air or library, books rarely made the cut. A new system of wing library orderlies was brought in to increase opportunities for prisoners to borrow books without visiting in person. The library also provided space for other activities, including the Prisoner Advice Service, Family Fables and theatre groups.

The certificated courses offered included English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), maths, English, criminology, the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award, radio production and first aid. Additionally, there were collaborations with organisations such as the Museum of London, where prisoners' art and poetry were exhibited, and the Notting Hill Academy of Music and Reckless Records, who supported prisoners to produce their own music.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Vocational training included industrial cleaning, food hygiene, painting and decorating, textiles, printing, recycling, barbering and the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) card scheme.

The Employment Hub, funded by New Futures Network, opened this reporting year. When requested, it arranged ID (e.g. obtained copies of birth certificates) and assisted in opening bank accounts. All prisoners with 12 months or less to serve were sent an employment assessment form. If completed, the Hub could identify what was appropriate for them in terms of upskilling (e.g. CV writing and handling disclosure letters) or making suitable employment links.

Employers' events were held throughout the year, and a construction industry day attracted dozens of interested prisoners. Many companies, including in the utilities and retail sectors, were reportedly keen to employ ex-offenders. The IMB was told of positive responses from potential employers and prisoners. There were also links with training providers, meaning that prisoners could arrange to attend courses once released e.g. the King's Cross Construction Skills Centre and Elite Project Services, which provided the Railtrack/Personal Track Safety (PTS) card training.

Engagement with business employers inside the prison was also successful. Redemption Roasters ran barista courses. Prisoners from the textiles workshop produced high-street quality tote bags from coffee bean sacks, which have been sold in the Museums of London and Docklands. Prisoners from the same workshop also produced professional quality printed merchandise for the Prison Service, including mouse mats, mugs and coasters.

Liberty Kitchen continued to train prisoners in the staff canteen and to cater for events inside and outside the prison, including celebrating the end of prison courses

and external weddings and birthdays. This year, 50% of the enrolled prisoners were on remand. With plans for expansion of the external street market stalls, there were real opportunities for motivated prisoners to continue this work upon release.

No Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) placements took place during the reporting year.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Prisoners relied on the OMU, which was a hub for information and advice about court appearances, sentence length, transfers, eligibility for and progress with Home Detention Curfew (HDC), and paperwork for release. Prisoners told the IMB that they submitted applications to the OMU and got frustrated waiting for a reply; 16% of the applications to the IMB this year were about the topics the OMU covers.

In last year's Annual Report, the IMB stated that the OMU failed to give the prisoners in Pentonville even the basic level of service that they should expect. There have been significant changes in the way that the OMU was run this year, and energised and dedicated staff worked hard to address the processing backlog which had contributed to prisoners' frustration. Staff shortages, as elsewhere, made the job harder. Some aspects of work, such as public safety, involved significant training for new staff.

Despite these improvements, communication with prisoners remained an area that concerned the IMB. Wing-based clinics were introduced towards the end of the reporting year that allowed prisoners to discuss their queries face to face with a member of the OMU team. This initiative was welcomed by the IMB, but a lack of information about many aspects of their sentence still caused prisoners much stress and frustration.

Legal visits in person (post-Covid-19) continued in greater numbers. Visits were initially conducted in the social visits hall, rather than the private consultation rooms (raising some concerns about privacy for prisoners discussing sensitive offences); however, by the end of the reporting year, legal visits had resumed in their pre-Covid-19 form. Gaining access to legal visits continued to be problematic, with solicitors repeatedly complaining to the prison and the IMB about the slow process of booking appointments, and inflexibility in the appointments offered. Appointments had to be booked by email in advance. There was one email booking address that was responded to sequentially by a small number of staff, with a large backlog causing significant delays in responses (particularly when staffing pressures meant fewer were available to deal with booking enquiries). Often by the time an email had been replied to offering an appointment, a solicitor would no longer be free at the time offered, meaning many appointments went unfilled or were missed. The prison was liaising with representatives from the legal profession to improve access and continue to make greater use of the 16 video booths available for legal visits and court appearances. Still, these difficulties remained at the end of the reporting year.

Young adults. Pentonville does a lot for young adults, but the IMB remains concerned that they are held in the prison at all. At the end of the reporting year, approximately 100 young adults were being held. These prisoners lived amongst the

older population but only shared cells with a fellow young adult. There were several bespoke opportunities for them this year, including:

- Time4Change, an ongoing programme which aimed to challenge the perceptions of young men who had grown up in and around gangs and crime, and helped improve their chances of education or lawful employment upon release.
- The charity StreetDoctors, which ran a three-part course for young people whose lives had been affected by violence. The aim was to increase their understanding of the medical and psychological consequences of violence, including teaching them life-saving skills.
- The introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award, adapted for young people in custody.

7.4 Family contact

In-person social visits continued on the wing-based model introduced in the previous reporting year, with fewer prisoners per session than before Covid-19, whilst social video calls continued to provide video visits (these were taken up in good numbers). Prisoners were able to talk to family and friends on their in-cell telephones. However, complaints about delays for administrative services relating to prisoner telephone accounts, such as for numbers or credits to be added to PIN phones, continued. These complaints varied in number throughout the year, generally in response to staffing pressures.

Funding had been secured by PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust) to enhance the visits hall with a greater family focus, and the snack bar offering tea, coffee, confectionery and other refreshments resumed service after being closed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The system for booking in-person social visits was a common complaint from visitors, prisoners and volunteers. Visitors had to book to see a prisoner using a central telephone line based in Birmingham; however, they often had to wait a very long time before getting through and the information provided by the booking line was not always consistent with that provided at the prison. In addition, the lack of easy communication between the prison and the booking line meant that no flexibility could be offered for prisoners or visitors in more complex situations. For example, when ID requirements for visitors changed during the reporting year, many visitors were turned away because of a lack of documents.

In July, regular family days resumed, where enhanced prisoners with children were able to be visited by their family for a period of four to five hours, with food provided, supervised by officers not in uniform. This had a demonstrable positive effect on the prisoners able to undertake such visits.

7.5 Resettlement planning

An unprecedented 75% of prisoners in Pentonville were on remand during the reporting year, often for unacceptably long periods, and last year we pointed to the needs of men leaving prison with little or no notice. This reporting year, the number of men released from court exceeded the number going out through the gate. The IMB was not clear what happened to these men when they left court as our remit stops at the prison gate. What is certain is that most had no release plan and, without one, had poor prospects of successful rehabilitation.

The IMB is particularly concerned about the number of Pentonville men released from court or prison who had no accommodation (roughly 40%). St Mungo's charity found accommodation for 85% of sentenced prisoners referred to them, but the number of referrals was low as so few men were sentenced. Only Connect and Standout had adapted their programmes to include remand prisoners.

Efforts to find sentenced prisoners employment on release had been stepped up:

- Only Connect provided courses about relationships, money and employability for YAs from three months before release. Four YAs found a job, 16 enrolled on courses, two went into further education and one started an apprenticeship.
- Standout worked with 55 prisoners on a three-week employment preparation programme, including CVs, mock interviews and how to handle disclosure of a criminal record.
- Switchback, working with sentenced prisoners, helped 28 men who had a release date to access training and work.
- JobCentre Plus coaches helped over 500 men with universal credit or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims, but it was a scramble to arrange community appointments for men whose release date was only known 24 hours ahead.

The prison opened a Departure Lounge in October. Recycled cotton bags made by the textile workshop containing toiletries, pens and an information booklet were provided to men being released, with items of donated clothing when available.

Two bail information officers provided welcome support to remand prisoners, but the pre-release team remained under-resourced, and the chronic shortage of probation officers in the community meant referrals were not completed.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14
Total number of visits to the establishment	362

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	37	59
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	25	20
C	Equality	22	20
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	36	58
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	54	115
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	19	38
F	Food and kitchens	9	16
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	207	143
H1	Property within the establishment	95	70
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	43	64
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	11	14
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	130	141
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	122	66
K	Transfers	22	7
L	Miscellaneous	48	44
	Total number of applications	880	875

Annex A List of Service Providers

- Maintenance: Gov Facility Services Ltd (GFSL)
- Education: Novus
- Escort contractor: Serco
- Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC): Penrose (subcontracted by MTCNovo via the London CRC); from June 2021, the Pre-release team.
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Practice Plus; Optometry is Pan Optical, one day per week; Dental services are Smile Dental five days a week; podiatry and physiotherapy were subcontracted from Premier (self-referral) and there is now a permanent podiatrist.
- Mental health: Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust coordinates the work of Practice Plus primary mental health nurses, with its own secondary mental health, inpatient and day care services.
- Substance misuse programme: Building Futures
- Gym qualifications: Active IQ
- Housing resettlement: St Mungo's
- Visitors' centre: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
- Resettlement support: Only Connect, Switchback, Standout



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