



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Usk and Prescoed**

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

**Published November 2023**



# Contents

<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	3
3. Key points	5
<b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	9
5. Fair and humane treatment	10
6. Health and wellbeing	13
7. Progression and resettlement	15
<b>The work of the IMB</b>	
Board statistics	17
Applications to the IMB	17
<b>Annex A</b>	
List of service providers	19
<b>Annex B</b>	
Tables and graphs	19

**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 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 Usk and Prescoed is comprised of two public sector prisons located around the town of Usk (south-east Wales). They are managed by one Governor supported by a senior management team (SMT).

- HMP Usk is a category C prison.
- HMP Prescoed is a category D open prison.
- Cilwrgi Farm Training Centre enables prisoners from Prescoed to work and receive training in agriculture, operating farm machinery, warehousing, and a range of other industrial activities.

The Governor and his predecessor at HMP Usk and Prescoed have produced meaningful, successful developments in the lives of prisoners and staff and progressed the establishment through Covid-19 recovery.

A comprehensive establishment plan has been produced, which includes plans to further increase employment outcomes on release and the Board looks forward to monitoring them.

**HMP Usk** opened in 1844. Located in the town, three main wings fan out from a central control point. These now house vulnerable prisoners, the majority being prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCOSO), approximately 48% of whom are over 50<sup>1</sup>. During much of the 2022 to 23 reporting period the operational capacity (OpCap) was reduced to an average of 220 compared to the standard 278. The regime is designed to prepare prisoners for safe release and reduce the risk of reoffending. Sex offender treatment programmes (Horizon and Kaizen) are provided for PCOSOs. There is an education department which during the reporting period included carpentry, bricklaying, and plastering workshops.

**HMP Prescoed is a category D open prison** located just outside Usk town, on the site of a young offender institution. Its aim is to enable prisoners, in the latter parts of their sentences, to re-integrate into the community before release. A range of education and vocational training is offered through work placements.

**Cilwrgi Farm Training Centre** is a satellite which enables prisoners from Prescoed to work and receive training in agriculture, operating farm machinery and warehousing; this has recently been expanded to include rail and track maintenance. Importantly these occupations can provide relatively secure and well-paid employment on release.

---

<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. Key points

#### 3.1 Main findings

Both HMP Usk and Prescoed were under Covid restrictions for part of the reporting period (RP) but it was notable that the management team were observed to have taken every opportunity to reopen as early as possible to provide opportunities for association and meaningful activity. Despite this, progress has been affected the shortage of probation officers.

#### Safety

- **Prisoners tell the Board they feel safe.** This was also demonstrated in a survey of prisoner perceptions.
- **Prisoner on prisoner assaults and self-harm levels are low.**
- **Use of force is particularly low** with two incidents at Usk and four at Prescoed. This fits well with the Board's observation that relations between officers and prisoners are generally good. PAVA (pepper) spray has never been used at either establishment.
- **The use of illicit substances at both sites was low** but there continued to be issues with prisoners exchanging prescription medication – this has been recognised by the SMT and forms part of their drug strategy review.

#### Fair and humane treatment

- **The board continues to observe productive, positive relationships between staff and prisoners.**
- HMP Usk is a Victorian prison but despite this disadvantage, outputs for prisoners are generally good.
- An effective family ties programme has provided an alternative for prisoners who have limited contact.

#### Health and wellbeing

- **Generally, the health and wellbeing requirements of prisoners were good, with prisoners reporting a positive view.**
- Both establishments progressed through Covid-19 to recovery utilising a risk managed rather than risk averse policy this allowed prisoners the maximum time out of cell and includes the opportunity for outdoor exercise.
- **Mental health services have struggled with low staff numbers.**
- Time out of cell continues to be a priority and is good. The Board notes that most prisoners are out of cell for 10 hours per day.

#### Progression and resettlement

- During the early part of the RP access to education was limited by Covid-19 restrictions and although some in-cell education occurred staff were unhappy with this. Facilitated by a change in management structure, they became directly involved in redesigning curriculum which now centres on essential and work focused skills.
- A new woodwork manufacturing facility has opened at Usk. This has the potential to improve post-release employment opportunities for some prisoners and in particular, PCOSOs.

- Our review suggests that most prisoners are provided with adequate accommodation post release – on the first night and up to six weeks later (we have no figures past this time) this represents a significant success, particularly in a time of limited housing opportunities. It is an important part of the service and one for which the prison has responsibility but no authority i.e. is unable to change.

### 3.2 Main areas for development

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

- Access to specialist mental health facilities remains a problem as the team struggled with low staff numbers.
- Prisoners, and in particular Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners, find last minute adjournments to their parole hearings distressing.

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

- The Board is concerned that the number of probation officers is inadequate. We understand that the complement of probation officers currently stands at one when four would be needed to cover the work involved.
- The loss of prisoners' property when transferring from other prisons continues to be a problem which does not appear to be improving despite being reported regularly and nationally.

### 3.3 Response to last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<b>UK Prisons Minister</b> The Board is pleased to note the <b>significant reduction</b> in the number of men serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP sentences) in HMP Usk and Prescoed. However, those remaining (many significantly over their tariff term) are aware that they are serving an abolished sentence, described by a previous Supreme Court Judge as a 'stain on our criminal justice system'. Several describe the mental health issues occasioned by what they see as the hopelessness of their position. We join other Boards in asking the minister to expedite the reviews of prisoners serving IPP sentences.	As the number of IPP prisoners who have never been released continues to decrease, the proportion of those who remain in prison who committed more serious offences and whose cases are complex grows. These prisoners are still assessed to pose a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs. These must be addressed before the Parole Board can consider that their risk to the public is safely manageable in the community under probation supervision	The Board accepts the general point with respect to the complexity of the remaining cases but notes that progress has been at a local rather than national level. A Welsh strategy Paper is being produced.
<b>UK Prisons Minister</b> Education is a key element in improving prisoner rehabilitation.	The budget is now managed by the Welsh Government, and it is ring-fenced for	No discernible funding resolution

After accounting for staff salary pay awards (mandated over the last few years) the Board is concerned that there has been an effective decrease in the funding the education department receives and that this could have a negative impact on prisoner outcomes	offender learning. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will continue to commission appropriate provision to support prisoners in an inclusive learning environment to achieve sustainable employment prospects. HMPPS will make every effort to ensure all prisoners can access suitable education and training opportunities that are aligned to their interests and employment ambitions.	can be reported by the Board.
<b>Prison Service</b> The Board is concerned that the number of probation officers may be inadequate. We understand that the complement of senior probation officers currently stands at one, when four would be needed to cover the work involved.	Probation Officers: the probation staffing target for HMP Usk is four Probation Officers and one Senior Probation Officer. Currently the prison is operating with two vacancies. Given the current national shortage of Probation Officers, the prison has been authorised to implement the Case Management Support Model (CMSM).	The prison remains short of Probation Officers and has been for the whole of the reporting period. The Governor engages frequently with the probation teams to seek a resolution to the staffing shortfall and is mindful of the impact of the increased workload on the remaining staff. Despite this, and recognising the national shortage, it remains the Board's view is that more Probation Officers are needed.
<b>Prison Service</b> In-cell telephony required.	SMT are pushing for delivery. Installation delayed in Usk due to the age of the prison. Extra funding required.	Funding received. Progress is slow but preliminary wiring is now in place.
<b>Governor and Prison Service.</b> Lester Unit needed replacing. This was mentioned in several reports.	The Governor and SMT agreed, and its replacement formed part of their plan – funding had already been	Lester Unit has now been demolished. This was held up for environmental

	<p>applied on several occasions.</p>	<p>reasons. The Board understands that Lester will be replaced with 60 – 80 ‘Bunkabin’ pods, planned to be in place by December 2023.</p>
--	--------------------------------------	---



## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

Prisoners work within reception to provide support and during the pandemic new arrivals were isolated for two weeks. The safer custody team produce a pack to support and inform the men. Printed ID cards and lanyards are issued to all prisoners on arrival and an induction booklet has been completed with the active collaboration with prisoners. The Board deem these measures to have provided a supportive environment for new prisoners.

#### 4.2 Suicide and self-harm

**During the RP the Board has noted relatively few incidents of self-harm at either site.** The most common method was cutting often followed by the ingestion/ overdose of medication. These have required internal (rather than external) medical attention. Incidents of individuals cutting themselves were generally reported as of 'low' severity level or superficial cuts made with an item such as a key. None of the incidences needed internal or external medical treatment.

Prisoners who used ingestion as their form of self-harm were less likely to be on an open ACCT (the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork protocol) whereas all the prisoners who method was cutting were on an open ACCT.

Other incidents included 'Food refusal' and 'Punching a wall/cell door'. The punching was of moderate severity and received internal medical treatment.

**The Board understands that many of these incidents occurred when a prisoner had received bad news and may have represented a form of stress relief.** Safer custody officers and key workers conduct interventions into any incidents. The Board regularly reviews ACCTs, those we see confirm that when a prisoner is on an ACCT they are regularly reviewed and observed.

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

The introduction of a specific safety governor enabled increased resources for safer custody. **Assaults remain low and there is a zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour resulting from violence and illegal drugs which appears to be working** and the prison compares well in functional performance group metrics. At Usk, there were two assaults on staff and 22 on prisoners recorded during the reporting period. There were no assaults on staff but four on prisoners at Prescoed. Levels of bullying remain low and most prisoners report that they feel safe. This supports the impression gained by members during our regular rota visits.

#### 4.4 Use of force

**Use of force is rare and PAVA, the incapacitant spray, has not been used at either establishment.** The view of the Board is that staff would regard its use as a failure on their part. During the reporting period there have **been two incidents of use of force at Prescoed** involving escorting prisoners from their units to reception on ratchet handcuffs – with one cuff on a wrist of the prisoner and one on the wrist of the prison officer. **At Usk there have been four incidents of use of force.**

#### 4.5 Preventing illicit items

The main element of substance misuse at Usk has been the trading of prescribed medication. Prescoed has occasional drug finds as well as trading in prescribed medication. A dog searching team occasionally visits the Prescoed site.

#### 4.6 Protecting Public Safety

To protect the public, prisons are required to hold prisoners securely and safely. This is the foundation for their wider work in reforming offenders.

Whilst completing a cell search, staff at Usk discovered photographic images which were inappropriate and required a referral to the police. The prisoner concerned was due to be released without license conditions. Due to the extra charges, he was released on license with rigorous conditions designed to protect the public.

The Board notes the vigilance of staff throughout this complicated process. They worked hard managing the prisoner whilst he was in custody and to deliver a release designed to protect the public.

### 5. Fair and humane treatment

#### 5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Usk prison was built in the 19th century and has the accommodation challenges associated with that. Efforts have been made to mitigate these, but its Grade II listing requires approval for all major work. **Although many prisoners live in cramped conditions, sharing cells designed for one, the outcomes continue to be good, and men continue to provide positive feedback to Board members.**

The prison has been observed to be well maintained and clean, there is little litter and staff undertake regular decency checks.

Prescoed prison is of more modern construction and opened immediately prior to World War Two. The demolition of the Lester unit is welcomed by the Board – we have highlighted its poor condition and unsuitability in previous reports. The complete replacement arrangements are currently unclear but 20 individual self-contained accommodation 'pods' have been set up, function well and have assisted in relieving the circumstances of Covid-19 and onwards. The Board hopes that these will be kept in the longer term. Further the Board understand that Lester will be replaced with 60 – 80 'Bunkabin' pods, currently planned to be in place by December 2023. In addition, two houseblocks at Prescoed have been refurbished and all windows have been replaced.

Operational capacity has been adjusted downwards in both prisons. This has resulted in a reduction in cell sharing and helped to facilitate shielding, reverse cohorting, isolation and other Covid-19 compliance arrangements.

The Board has noted that cleanliness has been maintained at a high standard at both sites, not least through the efforts of the orderlies, who have continued this vital work throughout the pandemic, and this continues now.

A full accommodation review at both prisons is planned but has been delayed owing to the pandemic.

The main kitchen at Prescoed seems to function well though staffing shortages (staff and prison workers) present sporadic difficulties. The Board has not received any applications about food during the reporting period. The catering comments book in both prisons contains few observations – some positive and some negative - but there are no recurring themes. Supplementary food packs continued to be supplied through the pandemic. Special diets seem to have been satisfactorily catered for. Towards the end of the RP staff have reported difficulties in obtaining some of the foodstuffs ordered – this is not unique to the prison and is mirrored in the local community but is an issue for the prisoners.

## **5.2 Segregation**

There is no segregation unit at either HMP Usk or Prescoed.

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

The Board notes that staff/prisoner relationships continue to be good. Communication between staff and the men appears to be productive and there are regular opportunities for representatives to meet with managers to raise problems or suggestions. As would be expected, some men disagree with this assessment, but they are in the minority.

The key worker system continues to operate in Usk, though the pandemic and related staff absences have been disruptive. Basic contact and welfare checks have continued and have increased.

HMP Usk has gained the Enabling Environments qualification. This includes having prisoner representatives on various boards being encouraged to take an active role. The prison community councils continue, with representatives from minority groups. This includes encouraging support and development for prisoners by prisoners, prisoner involvement in decision making about the prison environment and maximising key worker engagement with prisoners.

## **5.4 Equality and diversity**

In general, in conversation with the Board, prisoners agree that there are few equalities issues at either site. The equalities and diversity quarterly meeting (between staff and prisoners) monitored by the Board appear productive and considerable work is undertaken to foster understanding around this topic.

Prisoners who have protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act, appear to have their specific needs met. Prison staff are all well trained and familiar with the Act and needs of prisoners. There is a lead senior manager for each of the characteristics on both sites, all clearly visible for prisoners.

The DIRF process has been observed to be well managed, and forms are clearly available for prisoners on both sites. There is also the opportunity for prisoners to complete anonymous 'Community Concerns' forms if they observe something that concerns them.

- During the year there were 34 DIRFs submitted in HMP Usk and 2 in HMP Prescoed. Whilst this is an increase since 2021/22, DIRFs then were significantly reduced due to the Covid 19 restricted regime.

- Each DIRF is investigated by 1 of 2 experienced senior managers. During this year 6 were upheld. 5 relating to inappropriate racial comments and 1 relating to a transgender issue. All DIRFs are sent to the Zahid Mubarek Trust for quality assurance purposes.
- There were no appeals or submissions to the Prison Ombudsman.

Any issues arising from the investigations are acted upon, such as inclusion in staff training and general awareness raising events.

There are 18 prisoner forums for each of the characteristics, each held every three months at both sites. This extends to prisoner support where they have pregnant partners.

There is a continual programme of awareness raising events and displays, such as Black history month, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Month, religious festivals and dementia awareness. These are informative for both prisoners and prison officers.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The Prison Chaplains continue to provide support to enable all prisoners to practice their differing faiths. This includes Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Paganism, Jehovah's Witness, Hinduism and Judaism.

Visiting Chaplains and Faith Leaders are complimentary about the support provided in both prisons to enable prisoners to observe their faith. HMP Usk now has a new multi faith room, which is pleasant and well used. Both this and the Chapel have a range of activities in place throughout the week that are well attended and valued by the prisoners.

The prison regime is flexible for prisoners who wish to observe religious festivals such as Ramadan, especially in relation to meals. This year, prisoners were very grateful for this increased support.

During the year there are regular displays giving information about various religions and religious festivals, which promote a greater understanding of different beliefs among the prisoners and staff.

The Salvation Army now run *"Come and Meet Each Other"* (CAMEO) sessions in both prisons. The sessions in Usk are well established and valued by prisoners. They are held in a dedicated suite of rooms and offer a range of activities. The sessions in Prescoed commenced during this year in a portacabin. Again, the prisoners welcome this development and are participating in the activities.

## **5.6 Complaints**

There was an increase in prisoner complaints during 2022/23. During 2021/22 there were a total of 483 complaints, which rose to 689 during 2022/23. It should be noted that 75 of these relate to 1 prisoner. Prisoner feedback suggests that, in general, complaints are dealt with in a timely manner, and our observations suggests that the complaints system is well managed. The Board has seen evidence that prisoners are

kept informed about the timescales for investigation of all complaints. Comp 1 and 2 forms are available for prisoners. From Board observations, prisoners are generally aware of the complaints process.

The Board conducts random reviews of complaints and considers the investigations to be thorough and the responses very clear and respectful to the prisoners. Where delays occur, this is mostly due to complaints involving other prisons. There were 20 complaints relating to property during prison transfers.

## **5.7 Property**

There were 20 complaints, and six applications to the IMB, relating to property during prison transfers. This transfer issue is a continuing problem which, though it receives much attention, has not been solved.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

**Healthcare is generally good at both sites with prisoners regularly passing positive comments to Board members.** Primary care operates from Monday to Friday between the hours of 08.00 and 16.30. At HMP Prescoed (Open prison) it remains open until 19.00 on alternate Wednesdays to accommodate men working off site. Outside of these hours and at weekends the officer in charge of the establishment will contact 111 or escort the men to their nearest hospital as required.

A further impact upon staffing has been the retirement (but return to work on reduced hours) by a senior nurse and a band 6 registered nurse. This has resulted in the team working extra hours to ensure appropriate care for patients. The Board feels that their dedication and professionalism should be acknowledged. Successful recruitment has taken place, but two part time vacancies still exist. The completion of an MSc now enables a senior nurse to fully support the GP's using non-medical prescribing to improve patient care and access to treatment.

A footfall of between 50 and 70 men attend healthcare on each site daily, being supported by the nursing team, the GP, dental and pharmacy teams.

Following the pandemic an increase in prisoners being transferred into the open estate occurred due to a back log in court cases. This impacts the daily healthcare routine when transfers arriving during the afternoon without their prescribed medication and means that the nurse must resolve any problems outside normal working hours.

**Hepatitis B and C micro-elimination.** The Welsh Government is ambitious to achieve the WHO target and eliminate Hepatitis B and C as a public health threat within the secure estate by 2024. An audit of Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs) and a vaccination campaign for Hepatitis B is being undertaken. Engagement continues for support with the hepatology team to support any new diagnosis.

At Prescoed, where there are no 'bespoke facilities' for the frail and elderly, plans are in hand to convert Mitchell Unit, which will provide easy access to healthcare though access to the canteen will remain a difficulty.

### 6.3 Neurodiversity

An Autism Spectrum Disorder project is in place and is due for completion in August 2023. Thirty men have been referred for diagnostic assessment with 13 having completed the process, 11 meeting diagnostic criteria for ASD. These men have subsequently participated in post diagnosis work including one to one and group sessions. Seventeen additional prisoners have been referred and are waiting assessment, but no clinician is available to make a clinical diagnosis following their assessment in February. These men will be referred into the integrated Autism Service following the community pathway.

### 6.4 Social care

Social care is overseen by the Monmouthshire County Council Social Services Department. They interview and vet prisoner 'buddies' who provide support and facilitation but not physical care. An Occupational Therapist is available for prisoners and buddies to help with safe assisted support but when physical care is required (particularly "out of hours") this may result in a move out of the prison.

As observed in previous reports, the older population is increasing in both prisons. This is particularly so at Usk, where many of the physical amenities at the prison are not suitable for the frail. The Governor is attempting to address this problem, additionally a health and social care needs assessment is being undertaken by Public Health Wales (PHW) to look at the needs of older man in prison – it was envisaged that this would be published in late 2023.

### 6.5 Time out of cell

Data provided by the prison and confirmed by the Board's observation indicates that over 90% of prisoners at both establishments are involved in employment or other activities at some point. **The Board notes that on weekdays prisoners at Usk are out of cell for 10 hours a day.** This is restricted at weekends owing to lower staffing levels and all prisoners can participate in some sort of physical activity. This includes team sports such as football and rugby with community teams from local professional clubs delivering training to encourage wider participation. The department continues to extend and modify the range of activities.

### 6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Assessment and necessary support is provided through a Third Sector Organisation, Dyfodol. They facilitate the successful CHASE programme for substance misusers at Prescoed and provide acupuncture, counselling, and wellbeing walks. **Some 'graduates' of the CHASE programme have obtained employment with other drug rehabilitation companies on release.**

In addition to the usual testing regime, Prescoed was the first prison in the UK to introduce a "Incentive Substance Free Living" (ISFL) regime and compacts across the whole prison. A key reason for returns to 'closed conditions' is for drug misdemeanours. **Now since the introduction of ISFL, prisoners who test positive for Class C drugs, while having ROTL restrictions, are given the opportunity to engage with Dyfodol and are no longer returned to closed conditions.** The Board see this as a constructive development.

The difficulty at Usk appears to be the illicit trade in prescription drugs. This is recognised and the prisons' response forms part of new drug strategy to tackle the misuse of both prescription drugs and steroid abuse.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

Resources for wellbeing are advertised on notice boards and in the prison newsletter and the Board notes that peer support including the health and social care buddies are highly visible and are regularly observed interacting with prisoners.

There are "Come Along and Meet Each Other" (CAMEO) Suites on both sites, run by the Salvation Army. They provide diversion, socialisation, relaxation, and education opportunities, particularly for the vulnerable and are considered an asset. Unfortunately, the CAMEO Suite at Prescoed currently has steps up to its entrance.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education**

The re-design of the curriculum appears to be effective by addressing the core skills of numeracy and literacy linked to work-focused/employment outcomes and skills that were being missed before. **Both men and staff have commented positively about the change. There is now an essential skills group to help prisoners with more basic educational needs that have been missed before their arrival in prison.**

As reported last year:

- Open University students were provided with laptop loans allowing them to continue their studies.
- In-cell education TV is supported by workbooks.
- Distance learning courses were funded and set up by the Prisoners' Education Trust

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

Despite Covid-19 lockdowns and a general reduction employment opportunity, HMP Prescoed continued to be successful in providing work placements for prisoners. Previously Prescoed managed approximately 120 men working off-site on ROTL every day. At the end of the RP this was down to about 100 but the Board wish to note that, in the main, these jobs are well paid and include occupations such as:

- HGV driving
- construction
- rail and track maintenance
- manufacturing
- warehousing
- waste management
- agriculture

**Importantly, this provision enables prisoners to gain profitable employment on release. For example, 2022/23 saw the opening of a Woodwork Manufacturing facility at Usk which provides training and interesting work for a group of prisoners (PCOSOs) who generally find their opportunities limited.**

The Board continues to be impressed with the results that the team have achieved in protecting and developing opportunities. For example, during the pandemic men found employment helping to build the new hospital in Cwmbran, benefiting both themselves and the local area. At the end of March 2022 there were 100 prisoners working in the community on temporary licence; 82% of these were in paid daily employment. To achieve this the community placement team has continued to develop new relationships with employers – for example men are working for Transport for Wales to help build the South Wales Metro and in so doing, a potential long-term career for themselves. To aid this National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) training and exams continued throughout lockdown (24-hour open book in-cell exams were completed on loaned laptops).

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

Contact between prisoners and Community Offender Managers has been severely affected low staffing levels.

### **7.4 Family contact**

Both sites appear to have focused on children, families, and outside contact.

### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

Prisoners receive help with applications for bank accounts and are provided with identification documents (e.g., driving licence and/or birth certificate) to assist in housing applications.

The Board monitors the number of prisoners going into housing on their first night after release; during the reporting period we have been informed that Prescoed achieved a 94% success rate. From twelve weeks prior to release, prisoners are referred to the resettlement hub for aid with accommodation, applications for ID and bank accounts, universal credit, and disability benefits. Services include provision for accommodation, employment, and personal wellbeing.



## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	106

### Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	2
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	1	0
C	Equality	3	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	0	4
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	3	2
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	2
F	Food and kitchens	0	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	1	0
H1	Property within the establishment	0	4
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	2	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	0	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	2	6
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	1	0
K	Transfers	3	1
L	Miscellaneous	1	6
	Total number of applications	21	30

## 8.1 Supplementary comment about applications:

**Since 2019, the Board has reviewed the low number of applications lodged by prisoners.** In 2023 it reinvestigated whether this should be a cause for concern. The spectrum of possibilities considered included the following:

- The numbers suggest that prisoners felt relationships between prisoners and staff were generally satisfactory. The implication in that case is that prisoners do not feel the need to submit formal applications.
- That low numbers are a negative indicator implying that prisoners are disengaged with the regime, fearful of possible consequences (for example, being moved to another prison) or so disillusioned with the effectiveness of the Board that they do not bother to submit applications.

### **Our actions and conclusions regarding applications:**

The Board has reviewed what it sees as the relevant elements, these included:

- The nature of the relationships that Board members regularly observe between prisoners and staff.
- Feedback we receive from prisoners and their representatives e.g., Listeners and buddies.
- Our review of management information relating to men return to closed conditions, linked to our observations on-site.
- The fact that during the reporting period, prisoners could access the IMB 0800 hotline number to make applications to the IMB. It is of note that the prison supported this initiative, and it was advertised via the prison's newsletter and news screens.
- To allow access to the system without hindrance the Board accepts applications verbally as we noted that the appropriate forms were not always available.
- **To be GDPR compliant (General Data Protection Regulation) Board members carry spare copies of the approved forms for the men to sign. This ensures that they read the privacy notice and are aware and agree that members need to speak to staff to process applications.**

The Board receives comments (both positive and negative) from the men and, when required, these are passed on to the SMT via our rota reports to be discussed with the Governor at Board meetings. This appears to have reduced the need for applications by resolving problems early.

Previously some prisoners had suggested that those who submit applications may be 'shipped out' as a punishment for complaining. In the reporting periods 2017/18, 2020/21 and again in 2021-22 the Board investigated this and found no correlation between those submitting applications and subsequent removals to other prisons or (in the case of Prescoed) a return to closed conditions.

**The Board has found no evidence supporting the idea that the small number of applications we receive represents a negative sign.** The Board's view is that, in the main, prisoners are comfortable in submitting applications and would do so should they feel the need. Prisoners use the prison Comp1 system and in addition discuss matters of concern with the Board. The Board continues to keep this situation under active review.

## Annex A

### List of service providers

- The General Medical Services provider continues to be with the GP's from Malpas Brook.
- The health provider is the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.
- A substance misuse team is provided by Dyfodol. This is funded by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).
- A healthcare department which provides a day care facility at Usk and Prescoed.

## Annex B

### Tables and Graphs

#### Appendix B1 – incidents of self-harm, ACCTs

Figures from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

	2021/22	2022/23
Total number of incidents of self-harm	44	54
Number of ACCTs Usk	43	52
Number of ACCTs Prescoed	1	2

#### Appendix B2 – Assaults

Figures from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

	2022/23
Assaults on prisoners <b>Usk</b>	22
Assaults on staff <b>Usk</b>	4
Assaults on prisoners <b>Prescoed</b>	4
Assaults on staff <b>Prescoed</b>	0



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)