



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Ranby

**For reporting year
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

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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 concerns the IMB have.
- 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 Ranby is situated in north Nottinghamshire, midway between the towns of Worksop and Retford. Ranby is a category C male training prison (which holds those whose escape risk is considered low but who cannot be trusted in open conditions).

Since opening as a prison in 1972, Ranby has had the accommodation capacity regularly and significantly increased due to demand, including, most recently, in 2024, when further accommodation was built.

In May 2016, Ranby was named as one of six early adopter sites for autonomy, allowing the director of the East Midlands Prison Group to make business and financial decisions independently of the wider prison estate.

The certified normal accommodation, or CNA (the number of prisoners a prison can hold without being overcrowded), at HMP Ranby, as at the end of March 2023, was 892 and its operational capacity, or OC (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime), was 1025¹. In March 2024, there were 118 prisoners under the age of 25.

The residential accommodation consists of eight house blocks. Located in the house blocks are the departments for the induction of new prisoners, resettlement, skills for life and safer custody. One house block has prisoners on the integrated drug treatment strategy (IDTS).

HMP Ranby has no hospital but has 24-hour healthcare cover on site. The single-storey healthcare building accommodates other functioning departments such as the drug and alcohol recovery team (DART), IDTS and mandatory drug testing (MDT).

The segregation unit, or care and separation unit (CSU), is located in one of the older buildings in the establishment and comprises 16 single cells. Attached to the unit is a small, paved area that is used as an exercise yard and is contained by a high wall.

Education is allocated in two buildings, one of which holds the library and one the chaplaincy. For prisoners in the CSU, there is in-cell learning and teachers visit them, as necessary.

The workshops in Ranby, which are run both by the prison and the education department, include: textiles; painting and decorating; woodwork; wood assembly; plastics; industrial cleaning; officers' mess; data input; laundry; powder coating; engineering; barbers; waste management; gardens; and building trades.

Physical exercise takes place in two buildings and the sports field. In one of the buildings, prisoners are instructed mainly on weights and it is also where prisoners with physical disabilities are treated. Fitness equipment has been installed outside each house block.

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 was a high number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults during the reporting year.
- From its observations, the Board believes that, generally, there is a high level of violence in the prison.
- Illicit substances are still able to get into the prison, despite the extra searches carried out on people coming into the establishment, and the availability of illegal substances remains high.
- The use of drones to drop illicit items into the grounds and illegal packages thrown over the fence continue to be a problem from time to time.
- The CSU has had to manage some very challenging prisoners, although it does so with professionalism and care.

Fair and humane treatment

- The Board has observed that, in the main, prisoners are treated fairly and humanely by staff at HMP Ranby. Staff relationships appear to be good in the majority of cases.
- Parts of the shower and toilet blocks in some areas of the prison are starting to look tired and shabby and need refurbishment.
- Bedbugs have been a constant problem this year. They are very difficult to eradicate. The prison is training people to help to deal with this in-house as much as they can.
- Prisoners were not happy about part-time working introduced last year. But, during the reporting year, this situation has been addressed. The loss of pay was a problem for some prisoners.
- There are also ongoing problems relating to the transfer of prisoners' property whilst they are moving between prisons. This causes anxiety and annoyance.
- There are also ongoing problems with the transfer of prisoners' property when moving between house blocks or spurs and during cell clearance.
- Overcrowding continues to be an issue in the prison.

Health and wellbeing

- There have been some improvements in the quantity and quality of food since the amount of money per prisoner each day was increased. However, some prisoners still say that the quantity of food served is insufficient and many who can afford to do so buy additional food.
- Prisoners are complaining about not getting answers to their applications to healthcare.
- Due to patient confidentiality, the healthcare unit tends not to be particularly helpful when the Board has been given consent by prisoners to speak to them about prisoner applications.

Progression and resettlement

- HMP Ranby is not designated a remand prison, so problems arise when prisoners are not able to do some of the courses they need to aid their release.

Ranby is designated a category C training prison, but is still receiving a large number of prisoners with a very short time left to serve.

- The Board has reported previously on the changing population of HMP Ranby. This situation has continued during the reporting year.
- We are advised that 34% of prisoners who came through reception up to December 2023 had less than three months to serve.
- The Board believe that this situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Prisoners have been constantly located in the CSU due to their complex and challenging behaviour and mental health issues. Why is it taking so long to transfer these prisoners to an appropriate medical establishment?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- The prison continues to be overcrowded. What steps will the Prison Service take to reduce the operational capacity of the prison?
- The churn in the prison continues to increase. This has led to issues with resettlement and progression. What will the Prison Service do to address this problem?
- How will the Prison Service reduce the proportion of prisoners with short sentences coming to the prison?
- The proportion of inexperienced staff has continued to increase. How does the Prison Service plan to improve the training of inexperienced staff?
- The level of illegal substances in the prison has remained high. What measures will the Prison Service take to tackle this situation?
- The prisoners' canteen has, on many occasions, not been delivered in accordance with what was ordered. The delays in refunds have an adverse effect on the attitudes and morale of prisoners. It is apparent that the delay in many instances is unwarranted and is a cause for concern that can only be dealt with by much better contract management at a higher level. This was mentioned in our report last year. As a result of this, the prison is working hard with the canteen supplier to rectify the situation.
- Loss of property is one of the biggest issues reported by prisoners during the reporting year. Belongings often seem to go missing during transfers from other establishments. There is often a long wait for prisoners to be reunited with their property. This makes them frustrated and angry with the system. When property is finally deemed as lost, it would appear that prisoners are having difficulty in claiming compensation. How does the Prison Service plan to solve this problem?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- There continues to be a shortage of operational staff in the prison. What further steps will the Governor take to address the problem?
- There continues to be a high proportion of new staff with limited experience. What further steps will the Governor take to ensure these officers receive further appropriate training to enable them to carry out their duties effectively?
- There continues to be a problem with the availability and use of illegal items in the prison. What further steps can the Governor take to address these problems?

- What plans does the Governor have to reduce the levels of violence in the prison?
- What will the Governor do to ensure all prisoner complaint forms are freely available to prisoners in all locations?

3.3 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<p>To the Minister</p> <p>Concern raised regarding cell sharing, which has gone on for many years. This builds up tension within the establishment and makes for difficulties in the management of house blocks by prison officers.</p> <p>We commented on the fact that Ranby is designated as a training prison. During the reporting year, the majority of prisoners were, in fact, resettlement. The target figure, according to the Minister, was a mix of 65% training and 35% resettlement.</p>	<p>The Minister advised us there is a mix of 65% training and 35% resettlement.</p>	<p>No appreciable difference. Cell sharing continues to be a problem. The prison is still overcrowded and two people sharing cells designed for one person is common.</p> <p>During the reporting year, the mix was, in fact, 65% resettlement and 35% training, with a majority of prisoners coming in with less than three months to serve. This does not enable them to do the courses they need to enable their release.</p>
<p>To the Prison Service</p> <p>The prison continues to be overcrowded.</p> <p>The Churn of prisoners on short-term prison sentences causes problems with resettlement and progression.</p> <p>The level of illegal substances coming into the prison remains high.</p> <p>Problems with prisoner's canteen and delays in refunds.</p>		<p>This situation has not improved.</p> <p>This situation continues.</p> <p>We are reporting a similar situation this year.</p> <p>The prison is working with the canteen supplier to try to rectify the situation.</p>

Loss of property during transfers.		This situation remains the same.
Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Governor		
Backlog of complaints resulting in many prisoner complaints.	A new system has been put in place.	The new system appears to be working well. Staff worked hard to clear the backlog and we have confidence in the new system.
The lack of a Governor and a Clerk for a number of IMB meetings during the reporting year, with no apologies; also, the Board was not informed beforehand that no one would be attending.	Governor has rectified the situation this year.	Although we do not always have the No1 Governor at our Board meetings, a replacement has been available with a briefing supplied.
Old and unserviceable office equipment.	Governor has rectified this situation.	No problems reported.
No heating in IMB office last winter.	A new boiler was installed in November 2023.	In March 2024, the new boiler was condemned and switched off, as it did not conform to current safety standards. No heating or hot water. No date given for the situation to be rectified.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

When the Board was able to observe prisoners arriving at reception, the process was carried out with professionalism and care. All the relevant checks and processes were in place to enable prisoners to be passed through the system quickly and efficiently.

There is an induction process for new prisoners arriving at Ranby. However, there continues to be issues with lost property and cell clearances.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There were two deaths in custody during the reporting year, one of which occurred after the prisoner was discharged from prison on completion of their sentence.

Incidents of self-harm from 1 April 2023 to February 2024

Apr 23	May 23	June 23	July 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Total
75	66	65	84	70	88	63	52	78	47	59	747

ACCTs (assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents, used to support prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide) opened from 1 April 2023 to February 2024

April 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24		Mar 24	Total
30	32	23	22	22	22	17	21	26	31	23		23	292

Board members routinely check ACCT documents when on house blocks or in the Segregation units.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction

Prisoner assaults on staff from 1 April 2023 to March 2024

Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total
11	8	7	8	5	6	10	3	6	8	15	10	97

Staff have commented that prisoner violence against staff and other prisoners increased during the reporting year.

Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults from 1 April 2023 to March 2024

Apr 23	May 23	June 23	July 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total
16	18	19	17	25	23	23	26	21	26	17	19	250

The Board would like to thank the safer custody team for their courtesy and co-operation during the reporting year.

4.4 Use of force

Statistics on the use of force include percentages of the different minority ethnic and religious groups, and any anomalies are investigated. Monthly and quarterly senior management team (SMT) meetings discuss all incidents of use of force and those of self-harm. The Board observes these meetings when they are able.

4.5 Preventing Illicit Items

The prison rigorously scans everyone, including staff, who enter the prison to check for illicit items being smuggled in. The Board believes this has been an active deterrent, resulting in quite significant finds. However, illicit items, including drugs, continue to be a problem.

While the priority is to reduce demand, efforts are being made to reduce supply. All mail is scanned, and sniffer dogs used. During the reporting year, there were illicit substances' finds, purporting to come through lawyers. Prisoners repeatedly report to the Board that some Rule 39 mail (confidential legal correspondence) has been opened by prison staff before it reaches the prisoner, even though this is not allowed. The Board has found that many prisoners do not understand the difference between this and ordinary mail.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The laundry is now repaired after almost a year out of use. Prisoners' laundry will, hopefully, be back to normal in the near future.

The installation of in-cell telephones and laptops is working well, with prisoners reporting that they are of assistance to them.

Furniture and fittings are looking shabby in some areas, but are fit for purpose.

We rarely receive any complaints from the prisoners about food.

Bedbugs are continuing to be a problem. Cells are being taken out of use to deal with this situation, which affects the number of prisoners the establishment can take.

HMP Ranby has had cases of TB notified after one prisoner arrived suffering from the condition. As a result of tests carried out, several cases of inert TB came to light. These are deemed to be non-infectious.

Fire safety checks and drill are carried out regularly. This is part of the staff induction.

5.2 Segregation

The segregation unit, or care and separation unit (CSU), has a total capacity for 15 prisoners, with one constant-watch cell.

During the reporting year, there have been staff changes in the CSU and the Board continues to observe excellent staff and prisoner relationships.

The CSU is regularly visited by staff from the healthcare and mental health units, as well as by chaplaincy, the IMB and the Duty Governor.

At various times during the reporting period, the roll has been as low as four, while at other times it has run at full capacity.

Prisoners are on the CSU for a variety of reasons, including security, their own interest and cellular confinement, as well as for 'bed-blocking' (refusing to share a cell).

There has been a constant number of prisoners who are located in the unit due to their complex challenging behaviour and mental health issues.

Prisoners awaiting sectioning are still being held too long in the segregation CSU due, we are told, to problems with lack of mental health beds in establishments outside the prison estate.

However, the Board would like to acknowledge the professional and caring approach witnessed by staff towards prisoners in some very difficult circumstances.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers, key worker scheme

Staff relationships

Ranby has had a number of new young officers during the reporting year. They are given comprehensive training, but it will take some time for them to acquire the necessary skills to deal with older or vulnerable prisoners.

The Board believes that many of the younger officers being recruited do not possess the life skills necessary to deal with older, vulnerable or manipulative prisoners.

Prisoners have repeatedly reported that these young members of staff do not have the empathy or experience when dealing with prisoners who have problems.

The Board has heard instances during the reporting year of staff who are designated as key workers being taken off key worker duties when there are staff shortages elsewhere. The key workers believe this situation often impacts on their ability to give time to their key worker duties.

From observations, in the main, prison officers have good relationships with prisoners. Their concerns are listened too and acted on in a timely manner.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity are overseen by a full-time diversity manager and support staff. There were 106 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) completed by prisoners and staff during the reporting year.

Month	No. of DIRFs raised	Religion/ belief	Disability	Sexual orientation	Race
April 2023	3	-	-	-	3
May 2023	9	-	-		9
June 2023	8	-	3	-	5
July 2023	6	2	-	-	4
August 2023	9	1		1	7
September 2023	3	-	2	-	1
October 2023	5	-	1	-	4
November 2023	7	-	2	-	5
December 2023	4	1	-	-	3
January 2024	1	-	-	-	1
February 2024	-	-	-	-	-
Total	55	4	8	1	42

Although DIRFS were raised and considered for application, not all were deemed to be actual DIRFS, and the prisoners were advised to explore alternative avenues to address their issues.

DIRF conclusion

The department has concluded that there has been a reduction in the number of DIRFS submitted, as they endeavour to action any concerns and resolve issues before a DIRF needs to be raised.

Quarterly forums for each category are held by diversity and equality staff. The categories are based on the nine protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010, which include, among others, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender,

disability marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment. However, they expand on these protected characteristics, such as splitting gender into a young adult's forum and an older prisoner's forum. Additionally, they also conduct forums for foreign national prisoners, those from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and veterans, according to additional needs required by each cohort.

The agenda for each meeting is tailored to the strand's individual needs, and generally covers issues such as accommodation, gym, healthcare, work, education, canteen and social visits.

Peer mentors

There are peer mentors on most house blocks, but the Board has received complaints that they are being pulled off mentoring duties to fill a shortfall elsewhere in the prison.

In March 2024, there were 118 prisoners who are under the age of 25.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team at HMP Ranby is staffed by members from a variety of faiths, including Church of England, Roman Catholic, Free Church, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Jehovah's Witness, Paganism, Rastafarian and Quaker.

In the view of the Board, the chaplaincy is well run and caring, and the prisoners report a good atmosphere. It usually delivers a variety of regular services and festivals, as well as faith courses and studies.

During the reporting year, there have been problems with unlocking prisoners in time for them to attend worship. Indeed, a member of the Board has attended faith services on a number of occasions and observed significant failings in this area. We spoke to the Governor about the problem, who informed the Board that this is due to staff shortages and that little can be done at this time to rectify the situation. We look forward to observing the meeting the Governors are due to have to address the issue (in March 2024).

Members of the IMB are always welcomed by the chaplaincy team, and both staff and prisoners are happy to talk at length to the IMB.

5.6 Incentives scheme

The incentives scheme is used to reward and encourage good behaviour. The Board has had reports of some prisoners disagreeing with their incentives. We believe this is often due to poor communication on the part of inexperienced officers. But generally, prisoners understand the system. The Board is not aware of any new incentive schemes reported during the period covered by this report.

5.7 Complaints

The offender management unit (OMU) and the complaints department had been seriously understaffed for some time. As a result, the Board received numerous complaints about overdue replies by the prison to their complaints.

In 2023, the management of complaints was reviewed and new guidelines issued giving clear instructions. The Board has observed that, during the reporting year, the situation has improved and, as a result, few complaints are being received regarding those not being answered in a timely manner. The Board will continue to monitor the situation, but

we have some confidence in the new system. The staff are to be commended for their hard work in turning this situation around.

Number of complaints received from April 2023 to March 2024

April 2023	251
May 2023	272
June 2023	158
July 2023	250
August 2023	191
September 2023	215
October 2023	220
November 2023	254
December 2023	213
January 2024	287
February 2024	310
March 2024	300

5.8 Property

The Board received numerous complaints about property during the reporting year. The management of prisoners' property during transfer has been reported by the Board as being unsatisfactory over recent years. This trend has continued.

Property is still not being tracked efficiently on prison transfers which, in turn, leads to instances of property being lost. As per our last report, this issue continues to cause distress to many transferees into the prison and gives rise to anger and frustration to those affected. At times, this leads to breaches of discipline, which staff on the wings must then deal with.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The Board has received reports of prisoner healthcare applications not being processed in a timely manner during the reporting year. We understand that it is the role of the deputy matron to maintain the record of complaints. However, this role is vacant, which explains why no complaints' records are being kept.

The healthcare unit reports that this is due to the lack of staff and the length of time taken for new staff to be security vetted.

Due to patient confidentiality, Board members are limited as to the enquiries they can pursue. Staff are very difficult to engage with.

6.2 Physical healthcare

All prisoners are seen by healthcare at the point of reception and are subject to a full and comprehensive screening to identify any needs. This includes physical, mental and substance-misuse needs, and relevant referrals are actioned at this point. Prisoners' health records are received promptly via email and medications are received at the time of prisoner transfer.

In addition to a GP service, healthcare also provides dentistry, optometry, podiatry, physiotherapy and pharmacy services. Waiting times are monitored to ensure compliance with key performance indicators (KPIs). All prescriptions are ordered via an external pharmacy, including those that are both urgent and routine.

The healthcare centre provides fully functional clinic rooms that offer privacy and dignity for all consultations. Staffing levels continue to be a problem, because of the length of time taken for an applicant to be security vetted.

6.3 Mental health

The role of the mental health matron is a separate post to the usual healthcare services. She is supported by an experienced mental health team, which provides care for relevant individuals within a reasonable timeframe.

The mental health team provides input at ACCT reviews and segregation reviews.

Once again, the Board wishes to report that there continues to be very long waiting times, in excess of 28 days, for the transfer of prisoners to appropriate mental health facilities. During the reporting year, 14 prisoners were sectioned. As of February 2024, there were two prisoners with the potential to be sectioned, following appointments with the psychiatrist.

The delays depend on the area that the prisoner has been referred to. Out-of-area referrals tend to be difficult, as there isn't a central referral process, with each area having a different one. It has been found that Nottinghamshire referrals are quicker, as they go directly to the IMPACT team. Delays occur if there are not any beds, as pressure on beds in mental health hospitals is increasing.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime.

The policy for each prisoner is that they attend the gym once a week for a 1.25-hour session. There is a rota for each house block, which is available for prisoners to read on their in-cell laptop. The two gyms are working to full capacity. The staffing complement

when fully staffed is eight. Currently, the staffing level is six, which includes two seconded people. Recruitment is in progress, but we are informed that this process is likely to take many months, due to security vetting and training once in post. Gym 2 is now used for remedial sessions, but these are only generally available for one session per prisoner, per week. Feedback from prisoners regarding the gym is positive and there is always a big demand for sessions.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The work on the dedicated house block is continuing to go well. Prisoners are very keen to be transferred to this house block when a place becomes available. From the Board's observations, the staff are dedicated and professional and prisoners have a good relationship with them. Prisoners report that staff communicate well with them and that they enjoy living on the house block. During the reporting year, there were reports of the brewing of illicit alcohol, which occurs from time to time.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

All prisoners are called up to education induction in the first two weeks of their arrival at HMP Ranby. The inductions are carried out over two sessions. The first is to complete any relevant screening of Maths, English, learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) and reading. The second is for them to learn about the offer of education and work in the prison and to complete a pathway and a personal learning plan (PLP) with the information, advice and guidance (IAG) service. During this session, they go to the library for their library induction.

The following education courses are provided by the education unit:

- Functional Skills Maths: Entry level 1 – Level 2.
- Functional Skills English: Entry level 1 – Level 2.
- Essential Digital Skills: Entry 3 and Entry 1.
- Business: Entry 2 – Level 2.
- Art: Level 1 and Level 2.
- Painting and Decorating: Level 1 – Level 3.
- Plumbing: Level 1 and Level 2.
- Multi Skills: Level 1.
- Joinery: Level 1.
- Horticulture: Level 1.
- Tickets: Level 2.
- Catering: Mess – Level 1 and Level 2.
- Cookery: Entry 3.
- Food Safety: Level 2.
- Drugs, Alcohol, Conflict (OMU) Referral course: Level 1.
- Digital Graphics: Level 2.
- Monitoring: Level 3.
- Safeguarding: Level 2.
- Variety of LDD units delivered in Mentoring Course: Level 2.
- Barbering: Level 2 and Level 3
- Outreach: Maths and English.
- Business: Set up Course.
- Bricks: to start soon.

Prisoners are taught in either classroom or workshop settings or one-to-one in outreach. Support is offered to neurodiverse learners. The prison's outreach team supports learners who are not comfortable in the classroom to help them transition. Since April 2023, 2227, prisoners started courses and 1965 achievements were awarded.

The library service is run by Suffolk Libraries, which is subcontracted by PeoplePlus. The library appears to be well used and is popular with the prisoners. There is a good quantity of books of different genres and they all appear to be in good condition. The librarians appear to be knowledgeable and interact well with prisoners.

There have been problems throughout the reporting year due to the lack of escorts going to and from the library, education and the chapel. This has been impacted by staff shortages, i.e. escorting prisoners from their house blocks and returning once they have finished. This has caused significant frustration.

7.2 Vocational training, work

A large section of the prison is designated for the workshops. A total of 100 new jobs are currently being created to enable more prisoners to work full-time. Prisoners inform us that they would prefer to be working full time from a social point of view and also because they earn less with part-time work.

Due to the current cost of living rise and the resulting increase in the cost of goods, prisoners inform us that any loss of pay will hit them hard. This is because they are not able to keep up financially with the rising cost of the goods they can buy from the permitted catalogue. The Board is concerned about this situation.

It is not clear how the prison is going to develop its role as a training prison when many of the prisoners appear to have short-term sentences, so do not have sufficient time to complete any courses.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The Board continues to receive complaints from prisoners who are unable to meet and communicate with their prison offender manager (POM). This causes considerable frustration at times. Prisoners also tell us that they do not know who their POM is. This was an ever-present issue throughout the reporting year and it does not seem to be improving.

7.4 Family contact

The Board receives very few comments or complaints regarding family social visits. The Governor informed us that, at the start of March 2023, there were going to be changes to the shift pattern at the prison. This has meant that some social visits will now be carried out in the evening and at weekends. We have received neither feedback nor complaints about this system so can only assume it is going well.

7.5 Resettlement planning

The Board is appreciative of the co-operation of the resettlement team whenever the Board needs help and information.

Having spoken at length to the staff in the office, it would appear that little has changed with regard to providing accommodation to prisoners leaving the prison on completion of their sentences. There are just not enough places for the people who require them.

Resettlement staff raise a referral form, which is a risk assessment with all the prisoner's history. Unfortunately, prisoners tend to blame the resettlement team for not being able to provide accommodation for them in the areas they would prefer to live on release. (Despite this, the Board observed good working relationships between the resettlement team and prisoners during the reporting year.) The resettlement staff have informed us that landlords are able to be much more choosy when selecting people for their accommodation, as housing is very scarce. The local council (in theory) should be able to assist with emergency accommodation, but in practice this appears to rarely happen.

The new scheme recently brought in by the Government to enable some prisoners to be released early is causing additional problems for resettlement, as accommodation is tight.

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	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	4 One newly appointed member joined at the end of March 2024
Total number of visits to the establishment	208

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	12	24
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	7	13
C	Equality	1	3
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	8	13
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	14	11
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	6	7
F	Food and kitchens	2	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	12	26
H1	Property within the establishment	52	25
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	0	39
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	27	23
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	53	33
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	33	4
K	Transfers	18	7
L	Miscellaneous	0	0
	Total number of applications	245	229



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