



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Lancaster Farms

**For reporting year
1 February 2023 to 31 January 2024**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	5
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	11
5. Fair and humane treatment	14
6. Health and wellbeing	20
7. Progression and resettlement	23
 The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	27
Applications to the IMB	28

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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 concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison, and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that States designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Lancaster Farms is a category C resettlement prison (for those whose escape risk is considered low but who cannot be trusted in an open prison), with accommodation for up to 560¹ adult male prisoners during the reporting year.

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

The prison was opened in 1993 as a youth offender institution but later converted to an adult male prison. While it has an attractive layout, some buildings are beginning to show signs of wear and tear. The prison has four main residential blocks, each divided into two wings. In addition, there is a dedicated first-night unit (Grizedale).

The care and separation unit (CSU) in the Ullswater block holds 12 prisoners. Accommodation is provided in single cells, two of which have closed-circuit television installed. In addition, there are two special accommodation cells (where items such as furniture, bedding and sanitation are removed in the interests of safety).

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

The prison has good community engagement with local schools and a growing relationship with some local employers. Strong links also exist with local football clubs and there have been many excellent charitable collections and donations by staff and prisoners.

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 Background to the report

- 3.1.1 During the reporting year, the prison has run up to maximum capacity. However, one major feature of 2023-2024 has been the changing composition of prisoners. Originally, the prison catered for a majority of prisoners from Lancashire and Cumbria, who were based at Lancaster Farms for a number of years prior to release or progression to open conditions. However, with pressures on prison numbers, there is a growing number (now a majority) of prisoners from Greater Manchester and Merseyside. Not only are they transferred to Lancaster Farms soon after sentencing, but they can still have very long or very short sentences to serve.
- 3.1.2 In 2023-24, there has been more time out of cell for prisoners than in 2022-23 and the prison is making progress on more employment/training/association activities for prisoners. But, as of January 2024, could more be done?
- 3.1.3 During 2022-23 the Board was alerted to problems in staffing levels at the prison. We have been informed that this has now been rectified, but the Board is concerned about some instances when the regime is curtailed because of limited staff availability. This has a serious impact, particularly on evening and weekend activities.

3.2 Main findings

Safety

- 3.2.1 The Board's monitoring of the prison continues to reveal that the Governor and prison staff work hard to offer, and largely succeed, in providing a safe environment for prisoners at HMP Lancaster Farms. The Board has observed effective management of risks at safety intervention meetings (SIMs) and successful collaboration between Governors, the safer custody team, custodial managers, the mental health team and the chaplaincy.
- 3.2.2 The Board notes the continuation of high levels of self-harm among a small handful of prisoners, many of whom have challenging and complex mental health needs, yet continue to be accommodated at the establishment rather than transferred to more specialist and secure mental health facilities.
- 3.2.3 During the reporting year, there were spikes in the levels of violence, prisoner debt and substance misuse. Also, incidents of the use of force have almost doubled. In many instances, this has been linked to the changing composition of the prisoner population (see 3.1.1, above).
- 3.2.4 One particular incident during the year gave rise to concern when a prisoner, who had been taken to hospital, had been uncuffed due to his treatment but proceeded to leave his bed/ward. He was accompanied by staff at all times, but it raised issues about how the prison maintains prisoner/public safety in all settings.

Fair and humane treatment

- 3.2.5 The Board believes that, to a large extent, prisoners at HMP Lancaster Farms are treated fairly and humanely, with considerable care taken by prison staff to treat

prisoners with decency and respect. In-cell telephony has continued to work well at the prison by enabling prisoners to contact friends and family.

- 3.2.6 As in previous reports, the Board notes that a minority of prisoners continue to be accommodated on occasions in double cells, with limited toilet screening and/or no toilet seats. Whilst it is now normal for prisoners to eat out of their cells, there are still occasions whereby, during lockdowns, prisoners are forced to eat inside their cells next to their toilets.
- 3.2.7 Steps have been taken to refurbish some cells, showers and association areas. However, through its monitoring, the Board has identified several outstanding issues, such as poor ventilation in some cells and the absence of door screens, broken equipment on exercise yards and overflows and poor drainage in wet weather.
- 3.2.8 The Board has encountered evidence relating to the handling of complaints from prisoners. While the number of overdue complaints is relatively low, some responses to complaints are delayed (especially those related to previous prisons). Also of concern is that prisoners are sometimes not kept updated on progress.
- 3.2.9 The treatment of prisoners' property remains an issue of concern for the Board, especially when they transfer from other prisons.

Health and wellbeing

- 3.2.10 Monitoring by the Board during the reporting year suggests that, to a large extent, the prison has continued to offer good levels of primary healthcare to prisoners. On occasion, prisoners need to attend hospital treatment: the timing and prioritising of such hospital visits have been matters of concern for the Board. Whilst each hospital visit needs two prison officers to accompany each prisoner, this can also lead to staffing shortages and regime changes in the prison and for some prisoners to wait extra days before they can be taken to hospital. Whilst there are concerns about safety and security with hospital visits, we also wonder whether there are increasing numbers of prisoners requiring such visits.
- 3.2.11 The provision of mental healthcare within the prison continues to face many challenges. Mental health staff provide excellent care and support for prisoners, but given the high incidence of mental health issues amongst prisoners, the Board questions whether there should be further investment in mental health support. Difficulties remain in finding suitable alternative specialist accommodation at other prisons for those with serious mental health difficulties.
- 3.2.12 The Board recognises the range of initiatives deployed to provide prisoners with access to physical fitness activities in exercise yards and the well-resourced gym. However, on a few occasions, access has been limited due to staff shortages. The Board remains very impressed by the roll-out of the Project 180/CrossFit programme.

Progression and resettlement

- 3.2.13 Education providers run a range of education and training activities. Prisoners are largely positive about these activities. However, the Board is concerned that we regularly find half-empty classrooms and few prisoners in workshops. Uptake of

training and work activities increased during 2023-24. We remain impressed by the employment hub and the development of new employment opportunities. The prison is currently addressing its provision and improving the number of men in employment and training.

- 3.2.14 As part of Operation Safeguard (activated by HMPPS when total prison estate capacity reached a point that required prisoners to be held in police cells on a temporary basis, as overflow), a larger number of prisoners transferred to category D status (where they are considered eligible for transfer to an open prison) in 2023-24. Some anomalies remain and the Board has been impressed by offender management unit (OMU) staff seeking to remedy these situations.
- 3.2.15 We remain impressed by support for social visits. With an increasing number of prisoners living at a distance from families, the Board is concerned by the time/cost of visits to Lancaster Farms: social video calls between prisoners and families are available, but there are constraints on their use.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- 3.3.1 When will the Minister increase the number of specialist secure prison settings for prisoners with complex and/or enduring mental health conditions?
- 3.3.2 When will the Minister accelerate resolution for prisoners with outstanding Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences?
- 3.3.3 How does the Minister plan to ensure adequate resources for the day-to-day running of prisons and maintenance of a prison now over 30 years old?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- 3.3.4 Ensure better tracking of prisoner's personal property transferring between prisons.
- 3.3.5 Increase overall prison staffing across England and Wales and remove the anomaly whereby staff from Lancaster Farms are deployed to support other prisons whilst Lancaster Farms has activities curtailed due to lack of staff availability.
- 3.3.6 Ensure the substantial majority of prisoners at Lancaster Farms are from Lancashire and Cumbria in order to maximise the strong links and opportunities that the prison already has with local employers and accommodation agencies.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- 3.3.7 Increase the amount of purposeful activity (90% of men in regular education/training/employment) and association time for prisoners.
- 3.3.8 Increase the amount and effective use of key working at the prison with demonstrable targets and outcomes.
- 3.3.9 Increase the use of existing facilities (e.g. classrooms, the gym and railtrack facilities).

3.4 Progress since the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Action taken
To the Minister To invite Department of Health colleagues to work with the Minister to review the capacity of provision of mental health services and provide more secure mental health provision across the prison estate for those prisoners with severe and enduring mental illness.	Working with NHS England to develop a pathway for men with mental illness. Also, development of core capabilities framework.	Those presenting with severe and enduring mental illness often find themselves on the CSU. Transfers to specialist units limited due to lack of capacity.
Action to reduce the number of IPP (imprisonment for public protection) prisoners.	Committed to develop progression of those serving indeterminate sentences (no set release date). Bespoke IPP action plan.	Number of IPP prisoners at Lancaster Farms reduced in 2023-24.
To fund the Prison Service for the growth and maintenance of effective staffing levels.	Increased staffing levels at Lancaster Farms.	Board still concerned by instances of activities curtailed due to lack of staff availability (often related to staff deployment on emergency escorts).
To the Prison Service To further improve the strategies available to the prison to manage and reduce the number of incidents of self-harm, particularly among the small number of prisoners who frequently self-harm and could be assessed as demonstrating severe mental health difficulties.	Informed that resourcing has improved. Mental health staff at the prison work really well in challenging situations.	Board continues to meet prisoners who self-harm (often with complex mental health issues).
To conduct a wide-ranging review of prison staffing, to address the loss of experienced staff and of a large number of new staff who leave within 12 months of recruitment.	Staffing numbers at Lancaster Farms have improved.	Despite being informed that staffing numbers are appropriate given the resource available, the Board continues to see the regime curtailed due to lack of staffing (as above).

To ensure more focus on purposeful activities, including programmes to support sentence planning and full-time education and training and job readiness.	Improvements in 2023-24.	Still some prisoners not engaged in education, employment or training. Strategic and Educational Needs Analysis undertaken to help address this issue.
To reduce losses of property as it transfers across the prison estate.	Adoption of Prisoners' Property Policy Framework.	Remains an ongoing problem for many prisoners transferring into Lancaster Farms.
To the Governor To support the growth in the amount of purposeful activity, including education, training, work, and association.	Evidence of increased focus on education, training and work.	Some new initiatives applauded by the Board, but a large minority of men remain who are not participating in education/work/training. And association time sometimes limited by lack of staff availability.
To ensure that any work in regard to toilets in double cells is speedily addressed: broken screens, lack of toilet seats, etc.	Amey (contractor) undertake work as appropriate.	Still some ongoing problems. Board alerted (in autumn 2023) to problems in resourcing supply of toilets, basins, etc, when damaged
To review and progress improvements and repairs to ventilation in residential areas and drainage outside residential areas, including exercise yards.	No progress made (resource priorities and security issues raised).	When the prison experiences weather conditions, there are still major issues (e.g. lack of ventilation in hot weather; huge pools of water outside after heavy rain).
To ensure the effective use of body-worn video cameras by prison staff.	Wearing of cameras now mandatory.	Monitored at weekly Use of Force meetings.
To improve communication with prisoners in key areas, such as the progress towards resolving or responding to complaints, availability of programmes		Some areas of good practice (e.g. monitoring of complaints and discrimination incident report forms/DIRFs), but the Board is often approached when

and the reasons for re-categorisation.		communication has been poor.
To monitor the number of Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide peer support). Given the turnover of existing Listeners, to ensure that there is a rolling programme of training for future Listeners.	New programme has run.	The prison now forward-plans for new Listeners, as existing Listeners move from Lancaster Farms.
To ensure that processes previously agreed with the Board, such as that the Board will be notified immediately following the deployment of PAVA (an incapacitant spray), deaths in custody or the use of the special cell, are implemented. And that the Board receives responses to issues it raises in its weekly reports.	Regular discussion with senior team.	Responses to weekly reports have improved. Other contact/feedback can be patchy.
To ensure that contact between prisoners and their key workers becomes more effective.	None.	Still a major concern to the Board.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

- 4.1.1 Overall, the Board remains very positive about the reception service and induction programme for new prisoners to the prison. From the Board's observations, Grizedale (the first night unit) is well organised and efficient. It has been pleasing to learn that prisoners can commence on education/employment whilst on Grizedale.
- 4.1.2 While the Prison Service claims to restrict the number of prisoners moving across its estate on a Friday afternoon, there have been instances of late arrivals on Fridays during the reporting year (especially those travelling from Greater Manchester or Merseyside prisons). This has an impact on both staff and prisoners, including the induction process, medication transfers and food availability. By January 2024 the position has improved but the Board will continue to monitor this closely in 2024-25.
- 4.1.3 Transfers into Lancaster Farms often identify problems of canteen/money transfers from previous prisons, and of different procedures for ordering and receiving clothing: this problem appears greater in transfers from private prisons (Altcourse and Forest Bank). Such difficulties can contribute to prisoners subsequently finding themselves in debt.
- 4.1.4 As the number of new arrivals at the prison increases, there are plans to move the first night unit to more spacious accommodation in Coniston unit.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

- 4.2.1 Sadly, two deaths in custody occurred, in April and December 2023. One was, apparently, the result of a long-standing illness and the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and HM Coroner are investigating the second. The Board also received a PPO report relating to the death of a prisoner in November 2020 due to COVID-19 pneumonitis. The Board continues to monitor prisoners' healthcare and recommendations following previous Ombudsman reports.
- 4.2.2 November 2023 reported the highest number of self-harm incidents (77). These were investigated and attributed to concerns with debt, anxiety pending release and poor emotional control. Self-harm was reported in high numbers for much of the year, with some individuals responsible for multiple incidents: individualised work has taken place to reduce their level of risk and harm. A debt strategy is being drafted with a focus on a whole-prison approach to reducing debt.
- 4.2.3 Constant supervision has been used at various points throughout the year for those who are in crisis and cannot be managed by any others means. Constant supervision requires authorisation by a Duty Governor to ensure residents subject to these conditions are kept to a minimum. Such interventions require direct one-to-one supervision and are resource-intensive in terms of staffing.
- 4.2.4 A new cohort of Listeners began training in January 2024, with a view to increase numbers to 12, after a large number of Listeners were transferred or released, which left the scheme depleted. The Samaritans phone line remains accessible

24 hours a day: all residents are provided with the details to access this free support, if required, and can do so through their in-cell phone.

4.2.5 The weekly SIM has joined with the intelligence meeting from security to ensure there is a joint approach to safety within Lancaster Farms. There is mandatory attendance from health partners, all residential areas, chaplaincy and the reducing reoffending team, with oversight from the senior leadership team (SLT), to ensure there are positive outcomes from this meeting. The Board will monitor this new initiative during the forthcoming year.

4.2.6 Prisoner-on-prisoner violence was reported as high but reducing towards the end of the year, as were assaults on staff. Individuals who are the perpetrators or the victims of violence are managed through the national challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) model to ensure that the individual identified needs of those who pose a risk of violence can be supported.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The number of prisoner assaults on staff and on fellow prisoners was higher than in 2022-23. The Board learned of 176 incidents of violence during 2023-24, with a peak of 23 in December 2023. The majority of these were 158 prisoner-on-prisoner incidents (compared with 28 prisoner-on-staff incidents). However, there were seven assaults on staff in October 2023.

4.3.2 Illicit substances and debt appear to be the main causes of anti-social behaviour. In some months, there were also large amounts of damage to cells (e.g. 44 individual acts of vandalism to cells in January 2024).

4.3.3 The number of individual isolators continues to be small (the maximum was seven in September 2023); this has been linked to the denial of isolator status unless the prisoner discloses who he is isolating from. Any prisoner seeking isolation is supported via the CSIP process, and a full investigation is conducted to ensure that information provided by the prisoner is credible. While potentially controversial, when managed effectively on the wing, the threat is also managed.

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 There were 497 use of force (UoF) incidents in 2023-24: 60 planned interventions and 437 spontaneous interventions. This increase of 96%, from 2022-23, may reflect the changing composition of the prison population. At weekly UoF meetings, evidence is played from body-worn video cameras (BWVCs) and CCTV cameras across the estate. It was pleasing to learn of the increased use of BWVCs: of the 497 UoF incidents, more than 71% were recorded on BWVCs and 60% had evidence from more than one BWVC. New cameras were issued in January 2023 and mandatory training established for all relevant staff.

4.4.2 PAVA was drawn on three occasions during 2023-24 but not used. The IMB remains concerned about its potential use.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

4.5.1 Enhanced gate security, a scanner in the prisoner reception area, perimeter security, cell searches and the use of specialist dog teams have all assisted in the control of illicit items. However, during 2023-24, there were 86 occasions when mobiles/iPhones were discovered in the prison (with a maximum of 16 found in

August 2023). There have been a number of drone incidents (and 'throwovers') when phones or drugs have been dropped into the prison grounds.

- 4.5.2 During the year, finds of some illicit substances increased, particularly hooch, or 'prison alcohol', which can be brewed with ingredients obtained in the prison. Cannabis and paper laced with psychoactive substances have also been found. Enhanced spot checks are used by the prison staff to identify and support prisoners holding illicit substances as part of a debt.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

- 5.1.1 Lancaster Farms houses approximately 560 men, within six residential units, including a first-night centre, Grizedale, and a segregation unit (CSU), Ullswater, the latter consisting of 12 single cells: on occasion, there have been dirty protests. This is managed by officers, regularly cleaning and offering the prisoner showers and a clean cell.
- 5.1.2 Most of the prison population occupies single cells, although there is a proportion of men sharing double cells. This can cause problems with privacy, particularly around the use of the in-cell toilet and screens, or when men of different faiths fail to respect one another's beliefs. A small number of cells are in the process of repair, where flooring is compromised and toilets and sinks require restoration following damage or simply wear and tear. The residential units each have a communal central area, and a food servery. The men can congregate socially outside their cells and eat meals together, if they wish.
- 5.1.3 Prisoners wear their own clothes, which are brought into the prison on transfer, along with their other belongings. This property is marked off the list on transfer, checked on receipt by an officer and handed back to the prisoner. There are instances of clothing occasionally going missing during transfer; ideally, prisons send on lost property within a few days, once located. Unfortunately, extra clothing from home, either brought in by family or by post, is no longer allowed, owing to the possibility of illicit substances found impregnated therein. More recently men can order clothing from a well-known sportswear company, specialising at relatively reasonable prices.
- 5.1.4 Meals are collected from serveries on the residential units. Breakfast consists of the standard HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) cereal pack, and hot food is available at lunchtime, from 11.30am onwards, including soup, pasties, meat/or fish rolls, salads and fresh fruit and biscuits. The evening meal is served from 4.30pm (a little earlier on Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and consists of vegetarian and vegan options, hot dishes, fish, potatoes and vegetables, with either fruit or desserts, e.g. rice pudding. Of late, there has been an increase in the special dietary requirements of some inmates, such as those with gluten- or lactose-intolerance, which should be noted by staff on entry. The menus cater for a variety of diets, including for religious and health reasons. Food products may also be purchased through the canteen, although costs have risen recently, in keeping with the general cost of living nationally. Special diets have sometimes led to prisoner complaints. Also, the Board has commented on the failure by the prison to test food temperatures on the wings.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

- 5.2.1 Ullswater wing remains as the segregation unit (CSU). Adjoining the unit, there are four outside areas penned for outdoor exercise (some with exercise equipment).
- 5.2.2 Members of the Board observed three reviews during the year and noted monitoring reports that prisoners were dealt with in a fair and just manner.
- 5.2.3 Numbers on the segregation unit varied from between 2 and 11 prisoners on our visits. A small number of prisoners were kept on the unit for personal protection or

while awaiting transfer. On occasion, a few prisoners were detained beyond the 42-day limit. The Board is usually informed of this, and, through discussion, we recognise the rationale for this decision. For example, one prisoner was detained in the CSU for 82 days; this individual had engaged in a dirty protest for 70 days. The special cell was used once in 2023-24 (for three hours).

- 5.2.4 Board members have reported many times on the positive attitudes and relationships shown by staff on the CSU when dealing with some of the most challenging prisoner behaviour.
- 5.2.5 There is in-cell provision for prisoners who are segregated, should they wish to engage: reading and distraction materials remain available and radios can be provided by CSU staff.
- 5.2.6 Disciplinary hearings heard by an independent adjudicator (a District Judge or Deputy District Judge), instead of a Governor, when a prisoner is alleged to have committed a serious breach of the rules, continue to take place remotely. During 2024-25, we will establish whether earlier concerns about technology (e.g. poor sound and picture quality from a small laptop computer) have been rectified.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

- 5.3.1 The key worker scheme is designed to build positive one-to-one relationships between prisoners and staff, with the aim of promoting rehabilitation, helping to reduce reoffending and acting as a central contact between other services within the prison. This work is pivotal to enable the prisoner to navigate through often complex prison processes and procedures and acts as a conduit with probation and offender managers and others. From the Board's observations, relationships between staff and prisoners overall are seen as good and positive.
- 5.3.2 The prison seeks to provide key worker contact sessions for every prisoner, and comments from prisoners indicate that there are some issues regarding the amount of key worker activity across the prison. The prison has identified quality and consistency of the key work as needing further development and training, as this new initiative becomes embedded across the establishment. This remains a priority for the prison's senior leadership team.
- 5.3.3 Having the key worker based on the same residential unit as the prisoner they are supporting is seen as the ideal. However, the key worker may be detailed to a different residential unit, or the prisoner moved to a different wing. The challenge for the establishment is to maintain consistency as the prisoner transitions through the progression plan as part of the overall resettlement planning journey.
- 5.3.4 Despite there being a manager with responsibility for key work delivery, the Board has found occasions when prisoners have no awareness of their key worker, long lists of prisoners with the same key worker, and no regular meeting with their key worker.
- 5.3.5 A system of welfare checks exists with vulnerable prisoners, together with purposeful interactions between staff and prisoners to build better relationships and address any concerns. This has been evidenced in key worker entries and during the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) process, used to support prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide. Overall, the work and relationships are good and very positive.

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

5.4 Equality and diversity

- 5.4.1 The Board reviews the equality data gathered by the establishment and observes quarterly equality action team (EAT) meetings to analyse the results, generate actions and escalate any areas of concern. These meetings are attended by the senior management team (SMT) and functional heads of services.
- 5.4.2 Data capture relies on the P-NOMIS (prison national offender management information system) to accurately record the protected characteristics (including, among others, race, religion, sex, age and sexual orientation, which it is unlawful to discriminate against) of prisoners, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. One limitation of the system is the accuracy of the data recorded. Some data rely on self-declaration by the prisoner on arrival in the establishment, e.g. religion and sexual orientation. For obvious reasons, a prisoner may not wish to disclose their sexual orientation. Therefore, the data may have limitations.
- 5.4.3 During the reporting year, 55 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) were received compared with 41 in 2022-23. Although all DIRFs are investigated, few are upheld, because, for example, prisoners use the DIRF process as an alternative to the usual complaints procedure or they disagree with the outcome they receive. Prison staff have also submitted DIRFs, where they have witnessed discriminatory language used by a prisoner against another prisoner or member of staff. These have resulted in disciplinary action, including reviews of their incentive scheme status. All DIRF outcomes are quality assessed by the SMT and prisoner forums. In the future, external scrutiny will be undertaken by Partners of Prisoners (POPS).
- 5.4.4 The establishment currently has three prisoner equality representatives (there were nine in 2022). It is recognised this number is too low and further recruitment activities are planned to increase the number. One equality representative reported and identified a need for a prison training programme to assist them to undertake their role.
- 5.4.5 Foreign national prisoners are in a minority in the prison, amounting to 11 in total (in December 2023), made up of eight Irish citizens and one each from Pakistan, Jamaica and Slovakia. Liaison takes place with specialist staff at HMP Risley (the regional hub) to best support this group of men.
- 5.4.6 Currently, 14 residents have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) in place, which provides assistance for those who cannot get themselves out of the prison unaided in an emergency. The IMB has reviewed them, and all follow a standard format. These plans require a six-monthly review by the prison. An action has been raised by the EAT to ensure the PEEP follows the prisoner should they move residential units within the prison.
- 5.4.7 Prisoner forums have taken place during the year, linked to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion, care leavers, sexual orientation, travellers and veterans. These are helpful in identifying unmet or enhanced needs, e.g. gym for specific disabilities, social care support, transparency with the recruitment of wing workers, improving cultural awareness and improvements to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month activities.

- 5.4.8 In October 2023, a neurodiversity support manager was appointed and commenced a data-gathering exercise to formulate a neurodiversity needs analysis. The initial data (December 2023) identified 238 men with either identified neurodiverse conditions or who present with indicators that require additional assessment. This equated to 43% of the overall population of the prison. Neurodiversity incorporates, but is not limited to, conditions such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder) (67 men), autism (33 men), dyslexia (73 men) and social and emotional difficulties (106 men). In addition, several men 64 (27%) had co-existing mental health needs.
- 5.4.9 Comparative data has never been gathered in this form and will become the baseline for further reporting. A limiting factor already identified is the information-sharing arrangement between the prison service and the NHS. There may be a significant number of men with a diagnosed or recognised neurodivergent need not accounted for within the existing datasets. Initial data indicates the need for a staff training programme to raise awareness of the neurodivergent needs of prisoners and how best to support them. This requires interventions with the education and skills provider, Novus, and a review of the incentives scheme requirements to gain enhanced status, given that most neurodiverse prisoners are on the basic category. The challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs), used to manage and support those who are violent or pose a heightened risk of violence, will require further consideration. Individuals with neurodivergent needs may require additional support to regulate their emotions and be able communicate need and emotional states in a more productive manner. The data gathered in December 2023 note a disproportionate number of neurodivergent prisoners on open and post-closure ACCTS (70%) compared with the neurotypical population in the prison. Further, analysis is needed to review and develop action planning to address this issue.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

- 5.5.1 The chaplaincy team continues to provide a comprehensive support service to prisoners and staff at Lancaster Farms, but it is under-resourced. Not all faith groups have a designated chaplain, and it is disappointing to note that no Anglican chaplain has been in post for a year, despite efforts to recruit to the post. Currently, 91 prisoners identify as Anglicans. A Roman Catholic lay chaplain has been recruited to support the 136 prisoners within this faith group, and Mass is offered weekly by a visiting priest. Muslim prisoners (50 in December 2023) are supported by an Imam. Paganism has five followers, without a designated a minister. Efforts are being made to recruit a Pagan minister to cover several prisons in the region that also need to support this group. No religion has been recorded for 219 prisoners. Corporate worship is offered weekly and has a regular congregation. Occasional visits are offered for the smaller faith groups, including Hindu, Sikh and Jewish followers.
- 5.5.2 The chaplaincy helps all prisoners, irrespective of specific religious affiliations, or none. All men in the CSU see a chaplain each day. The chaplaincy team attends ACCT reviews, the weekly SIM meetings, segregation reviews, all reception interviews and complex case reviews and makes weekly pastoral visits to every prisoner on an ACCT. The work of the chaplaincy encompasses activities across the prison. A Bible study group meets weekly, while the Alpha Course has been offered and is over-subscribed, with further courses being organised to meet the need.

- 5.5.3 Liaison with community groups outside the prison takes place to recruit volunteers to support the work of the chaplaincy and create links with specific faith groups, e.g. Muslim community organisations.
- 5.5.4 Specific courses have been introduced to meet prisoner needs, e.g. Living with Loss (bereavement support), Care for the Family (parenting), Faith Inside (faith exploration) and the Sycamore Tree Course (restorative justice).
- 5.5.5 The chaplaincy has specific responsibilities for family contact and engagement and liaises with POPS and contributes to the wider Family and Significant Others Strategy. The core of the strategy being that positive family relationships can be maintained to support reduced reoffending on release. Chaplaincy staff can facilitate complex social visits in the chapel lounge.
- 5.5.6 The Christians Against Poverty (CAP) money management course is offered as part of the overall prison strategy to reduce debt. Events are organised, with input from independent guests and motivational speakers such as the Christian Biker Association. Invited guests have included two spoken word artists and poets, a rapper and a hip hop poet incorporating recording lyrics and music. These events have been inspirational for some of the men who find it hard to engage in other more formalised activities, e.g. education.
- 5.5.7 The chaplaincy provides support to men with family members who are receiving end-of-life care and at bereavement. This includes liaison with family members and funeral arrangements. It is not always possible for a prisoner to attend a hospice where a family member is located or to attend a funeral, given the need for an escort by prison staff and transport. The chaplaincy has been able to facilitate a virtual visit using the available technology, where this has been permitted, and time for reflection in the Chapel.

5.6 Incentives scheme

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

5.7 Complaints

- 5.7.1 Complaints (using form Comp 1) and appeals (using Comp 1A) are administered by the complaints clerk. It has been valuable to have dedicated prison staff from the business hub working on this activity throughout the year.
- 5.7.2 Each month, the prison receives over 100 complaints from prisoners (e.g. 111 in December 2023; 153 in January 2024). The percentage of overdue responses is approximately 5-8%, lower than in 2022-23, when it was 10%. Many are related to property and issues at prisons from where prisoners have been transferred. The impact on prisoners, in terms of frustration and uncertainty, is clear from our monitoring work. In these cases, more regular updates and acknowledgments of the delays could be issued to prisoners. However, there are a minority of internal complaints (less than half of outstanding complaints) related to Lancaster Farms that are not addressed within the specified timelines. A small number of prisoners

raise large numbers of complaints (e.g. one prisoner submitted nine complaints in January 2024).

5.7.3 We also note that some applications from prisoners to the Board make reference to complaints submitted, and to a level of dissatisfaction with the content of responses to those complaints. The Board is pleased to note that each month, one of the Governors reviews a sample ten complaints and their responses.

5.7.4 The prison, including the Board, receives a small number of confidential complaints each year (e.g. the Board received three in 2023-24). While these complaints are often related to sensitive personal information about a prisoner and/or member of staff, any response to the Board from management appears to be ad hoc.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 Again, applications to the Board relating to property accounted for 19-20% of all applications in 2023-24, which mirrors the proportions since 2020. A common theme is property not being transferred into the establishment at the same time as the prisoner. The delay or loss of property, including documents, family photos and other personal possessions that are difficult or impossible to replace, causes additional anxiety and stress.

5.8.2 The additional work for prison staff attempting to track down missing property during the transfer of prisoners between establishments absorbs scarce resources and involves manual recording processes. Regrettably, once a prisoner transfers out of the previous establishment, it is sometimes difficult to obtain satisfactory responses to enquiries about their property. These issues are not new and not unique to this establishment; this is a national issue, repeated in many other prisons, and requiring action from HMPPS. Further work is needed to address systemic and recurring issues in the management of prisoners' property.

5.8.3 Confusion over what property can be sent to a prisoner by their family causes frustration. Such parcels are not accepted by the establishment and are returned without the prisoner being advised that the property has been sent back. Anecdotal evidence suggests different prisons provide different advice to prisoners.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

- 6.1.1 Spectrum has been the main provider of healthcare services at the prison, with mental healthcare services being run by Tees, Esk and Wear Valley, ultrasound by Healthshare, and dentistry by Smart Dental. However, in December 2023, we learned that the Practice Plus Group would run and manage all physical and mental health care services at the prison from April 2024: mobilisation and transition is now underway. During 2023-24, staff numbers remained at approximately 40. Sometimes, there have been problems in recruiting clinical and support staff (especially band 5 general nurses). Some services (e.g. radiography and ultrasound) take place on specific days each month.
- 6.1.2 The waiting times for GP services have varied throughout the reporting year but, typically, have been up to three weeks; however, there are regular nurse-led triage clinics that will support urgent cases and refer to the GP as quickly as possible, where appropriate. Whilst the waiting time for routine dentistry improved during 2023-24, to just three weeks, by January 2024, it stood at 17 weeks.
- 6.1.3 The health checks at reception include those for bloodborne diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV and syphilis. In accordance with the prison elimination programme, it is able to treat positive cases of hepatitis C with an eight-week programme. Healthcare staff are also able to administer any missing childhood vaccinations when these are discovered on reception into the establishment.
- 6.1.4 During the reporting year, there were a small number of incidences of Covid at the prison, mostly of staff rather than prisoners. Isolation procedures took place as/when necessary.
- 6.1.5 On our monitoring visits, the Board found that prisoners were, generally, positive about the standard of healthcare they received. However, the Board and the healthcare staff are aware that an increasing number of prisoners now present with more complex health conditions. And, during 2023-24, there was a large number of hospital visits by prisoners.
- 6.1.6 Healthcare complaints are dealt with by the healthcare manager and predominantly concern the types of analgesics available in the establishment. Applications relating to healthcare received by the Board were, approximately, 15% of overall applications.

6.2 Physical healthcare

- 6.2.1 Vaccination take-up (including flu and Covid-19) generally mirrors that of the general community. After some good percentages in previous years, the take up of flu vaccination at Lancaster Farms has dropped to 36% of those deemed 'at risk', including the small number of prisoners over the age of 65. As a percentage of the total prison population, this figure falls to less than 10%. Equally of concern is that two-thirds of healthcare staff had not had their own flu vaccination by the end of December 2023.
- 6.2.2 The prison does not have 24-hour nursing and support care. It is reliant on other establishments to accept prisoners requiring more intervention. For secondary care, prisoners are taken to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. On occasion,

especially if in-patient care is required, this causes disruption to the prison regime, as two officers need to be always on duty at the hospital with each prisoner. The prison schedules up to two hospital appointments each weekday. However, there were times when prioritisation needed to take place and some prisoners were unable to attend hospital. This can cause distress to prisoners with conditions that require prompt attention.

- 6.2.3 With the pressure on the local hospital, the prison's healthcare provider has sought to upskill its own workforce so that more activity can take place at the prison (e.g. non-medical prescribing; suturing; catheterisation).

6.3 Mental healthcare

- 6.3.1 As a result of the increasing number of prisoners requiring mental health support, the range of services has been increasing: primary mental health care support; pharmacy support; psychological therapies; counselling; trauma support including OUT Spoken (talking therapy). Given that a large number of prisoners have mental health problems, the Board was reassured to learn that, despite considerable pressures, staff were able to respond to routine referrals within four working days and urgent referrals in one working day. However, 40% of prisoners reported in a survey in August 2022 that they were unable to access mental health services.
- 6.3.2 Fortunately, the mental health team was able to recruit to vacancies that arise. The services of psychiatrists for two sessions per week have been maintained. In addition, the service benefits from a close working relationship with Guild Lodge (a secure mental health facility in Preston).
- 6.3.3 Despite excellent work by the mental health team, a small number of prisoners frequently self-harmed and displayed serious mental health conditions. The Board's view is that such prisoners would be better placed in a specialist facility where the prisoner's health could be better supported.

6.4 Social care

- 6.4.1 The prison liaises with Lancashire County Council (LCC) in respect of social care, with healthcare staff undertaking the initial assessment. LCC completes assessments. There was an increase in the number of assessments and requirements for support (usually provided by healthcare staff or fellow prisoners). During visits, members of the Board both observed and spoke to prisoners providing practical support, such as pushing those who are wheelchair-dependent to the healthcare centre, for example, and providing some in-cell tasks, such as making hot drinks. This arrangement appeared to work well, with prisoners who were both giving and receiving support expressing their satisfaction.

6.5 Exercise, regime

- 6.5.1 Outdoor exercise was maintained for all prisoners, although there were often occasions (especially at weekends and in the early evening) when these opportunities were cancelled. All wings benefit from an outside exercise area which, apart from the CSU and first night unit, contains outdoor gym equipment.
- 6.5.2 There is a very well-resourced gym. Sessions in the gym for those referred by healthcare staff take place in the evenings. Healthcare referrals can be for both physical and mental health reasons. Both the fitness suite and the sports hall

have wheelchair access. However, the gym often remains underused, particularly at weekends.

- 6.5.3 In 2022-23, a new rehabilitation programme (Project 180/CrossFit) focusing on fitness and teamwork, was established; this was extended during 2023-24. Excellent relationships formed part of the success of this programme, and the Board observed training sessions in the gym.
- 6.5.4 The physical education and offender management teams continue to deliver the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at Lancaster Farms. It has been instrumental in building skills and confidence amongst younger prisoners. Feedback from prisoners was positive.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

- 6.6.1 Spectrum continues to provide the substance misuse service at the prison. Approximately 180 prisoners are seen by the service each week.
- 6.6.2 The Board is supportive of the substance misuse team, which feels that uniformed staff could learn more about its work. This could further help achieve the drug rehabilitation goals of Coniston wings (see below).
- 6.6.3 The key focus of the Coniston wings is drug rehabilitation, with Coniston 1 (C1) being the incentivised substance living unit, and Coniston (C2) holding some prisoners being treated for addiction with methadone. Prisoners on C2 work to reduce their dosage of methadone and make informed choices about their treatment. Approximately 68 prisoners are supported each month across the prison with methadone.
- 6.6.4 The Board is pleased to identify Coniston as a supportive environment, where prisoners are empowered and given ownership of their recovery. The drug recovery team works to build prisoners' self-confidence; in addition, prisoners find support from others on their wing who have had similar experiences.
- 6.6.5 The Project 180/CrossFit project has provided prisoners with a new, positive focus: fitness. Prisoners learn about diet and general health and wellbeing. The Board is impressed by the programme and continues to monitor the positive impact it has on participants.

6.7 Soft skills

- 6.7.1 The Board recognises the support given to prisoners to assist levels of reading and writing, from initial assessment at induction onwards. However, with increased key worker activity, this support could be signposted more quickly and effectively. It was pleasing to learn of successful Koestler Awards (for arts in criminal justice) in summer 2023.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

- 7.1.1 A variety of classes has become established since the pandemic. Full delivery resumed during 2022 and a full regime ran in 2023-24 for the whole reporting year.
- 7.1.2 Classes available include arts, business IT and sports. Gym classes take place in the gym. Also run are mentoring, food safety and industrial cleaning. The providers are proud of the courses they offer, and the men treat the staff and the subjects with considerable respect.
- 7.1.3 The library continues to be popular. Apart from a large stock of books, other material is available, including audio and visual. The library tried new ventures during the reporting year, such as the 'Telling Stories Project', for example, which involved writers with prison experience coming and sharing with the men. Quick reads and audibles were regularly used and supported reading, as well as external bodies, such as the Shannon Trust. The library offered Storybook Dads, an organisation that helps parents stay connected by recording stories onto audio CDs for their children to listen to at home. There was help for less confident readers. The CDs were cleaned up for sound and effects added before they were sent home. There was also Bedtime Stories, where the men could take a book from the library and read it over their own phone to their child.
- 7.1.4 Evening classes were operating, although the published programme was not yet in full swing: guitar, arts and crafts, books and games and the library are all on offer and in demand. These were moved from education to the wings to make access easier and decrease cancellations. They are published daily in the morning briefing and on the units.
- 7.1.5 The prison's reading strategy has been developed in line with HMPPS's reading reviews. Monthly meetings have driven innovations such as 'Drop Everything and Read' and workshop libraries, which have improved men's access to reading materials. At new staff inductions, awareness of education and reading has been given a raised profile. In 2024, a specialist will be employed to drive standards in reading and to ensure that all readers are reached.
- 7.1.6 Industry and workshop made good progress towards embedding English and maths opportunities in their environment, and men had regular access to enrichment opportunities. In areas such as Farms and Gardens, outside agencies were worked with to help contextualise the work they were doing daily. Work was being done towards getting employers involved who may provide support for accommodation and employment on release (along with contributing towards the prisoner's wage).

7.2 Vocational training, work

- 7.2.1 A full regime was running in 2023-24. There was a broad range on offer: painting and decorating, construction, bricklaying, joinery, hospitality and catering, and waste management. The men responded positively to these and spoke highly of the options. Hospitality and catering have done much to provide attractive and valuable courses, including signing up to schemes backed by high street names (especially in the coffee-house/restaurant chains). NVQs were offered and were valued.

- 7.2.2 One issue raised on several monitoring visits concerned what happens if a prisoner is unable to work (e.g. the teacher has phoned in sick). The policy is clear that a slip should be issued. However, this does not always happen and can lead to problems (e.g. entitlement to income). Closures are kept to a minimum and any teacher absences are covered by Education Managers.

7.3 Offender management, progression

- 7.3.1 *'Management and rehabilitation in custody provides long-term support from the point of entry into prison to an individual's transition back into the community with the aim of reducing reoffending.'*
Prison Reform Trust, July 2022.

At Lancaster Farms, every prisoner's transition into the community is managed from a public protection and risk management point of view. The reporting period has proved challenging, owing to lots of extra work in the amount of 'churn' of new and progressing prisoners to/from the prison whilst having staff vacancies and sickness. The prison has been running on 60% of relevant staffing. In parallel, there is a shortage of probation places, where court work is always prioritised. The Board has seen the prison working well, despite the competing pressures. Prison offender managers (POMs) and probation officers continue to work effectively in assessing the need, wherever it may lie, and often signposting the prisoner.

The offender assessment system (OASys) involves a risk-and-needs assessment. Certain issues, such as, for example, why the offence has taken place and what can be done to help prevent reoffending, or whether a prisoner is likely to harm himself or others and what can be done to address this, are considered during an interview and a self-assessment questionnaire. The key worker should know the prisoners very well, particularly with regard to a comprehensive referral to the POMs and providing support throughout the custodial period.

- 7.3.2 Access to education, skills and work can, occasionally, be curtailed owing to staff leave and sickness. However, a good number of work and developmental skills are available, and the men can move forward on release within roles available in partner organisations, particularly in catering and the hospitality industry.
- 7.3.3 Lancaster Farms has recently re-started the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards scheme to assist younger men in achieving set targets to help reduce reoffending. This scheme will continue to expand over the next few months, whereby a bronze medal can be awarded within the prison, allowing the men to work for their silver award once returned to the community.
- 7.3.4 The Project 180/CrossFit programme runs successfully at Lancaster Farms and provides a valuable gymnasium experience for prisoners returning to the community. The scheme is extremely valuable in ensuring that those completing a prison sentence are less likely to return to their old system of reoffending.

7.4 Family contact

- 7.4.1 Families of prisoners miss out on sharing family events such as birthdays and Christmas. Offenders are stigmatised for their offence and their families often are too. Approximately 45% of prisoners lose contact with their families after entering prison, while 22% who were married become divorced or separated. In this

situation, we applaud action by staff at Lancaster Farms to help remedy this situation.

- 7.4.2 Partners of Prisoners and Family Support (POPS) began in 1988, nationally, forming a charity, and providing a visitor centre with food and drink. At Lancaster Farms, from the initial meet and greet process, in preparation for a visit for the first time, the support offered is transparent, open and helps manage the situation, particularly for children of prisoners. It is important that public protection is addressed and that the right decision is made for a child to grasp the concept that their father is not just working away or has left the family home. The POPs team at Lancaster Farms provides all that is needed for a safe and valuable prison visit, even advising of the style of dress appropriate for visitors and what can and cannot be taken into the prison.

Their welcome letter states: *'Our role is to provide support for prisoners and families with regards to visits, property, help with travel costs and emotional support throughout the whole visits process.'*

- 7.4.3 A family engagement worker is appointed for new visitors, with the completion of a relationship questionnaire. The use of social media keeps families up to date with special events, including membership of a family forum, which involves meetings between families and senior figures in the prison, e.g. Governors and department heads. Storybook Dads and the ordering of celebration cakes are just two of the activities that can be enjoyed by prisoners in making their social visits memorable.
- 7.4.4 The team at Lancaster Farms keeps close records of the number of visitors, including children, their disabilities and/or cultures, and differing times of more popular visiting days. These data are critical in establishing a good working relationship between prisoners, their visitors, and the POPS team, who work effectively in providing the best experience for all parties involved in a prison visit.
- 7.4.5. At the end of the reporting year, the Family and Significant Others Strategy was updated: *'HMP Lancaster Farms is committed to providing a rehabilitative environment for everyone that lives in our establishment. We aim to be a fair and equitable place for all prisoners in our care, our staff and anyone else that may visit the establishment ... (We) are committed to ensuring that family relationships are a priority and considered in everything we do...in the care of our prisoners and listen to their views and concerns enabling them to contribute to future planning.'*

This important piece of work covers issues such as prisoner support and diversity and inclusion and includes a thorough, easy-to-understand chapter on social and official visits, including social video calls. It also recognises the experience of partnership working, with careful planning for moving forward and a list of useful links and signposting.

7.5 Resettlement planning

- 7.5 1 Resettlement planning is an area in which HMP Lancaster Farms takes pride and has sought to have many innovations. The prison is keen to celebrate examples of success and good practice. This is to be commended, as successful resettlement is a major key to avoiding reoffending and playing a positive role in society. Prisoners are anxious when, due for release, they have no settled accommodation or employment settled.

Current employment for six months after release is 41.35%. Accommodation on release is averaging 89.68%, with a target of 90%. To assist with this, there is now the 'departure lounge' in the visitors centre, staffed by 'release mates', who support prisoners and families on release. They now see 51% of prisoners on the day of release and the service is growing in popularity.

- 7.5.2 In the reporting period, HMP Lancaster Farms has had one of the highest employment figures on release. Figures are beginning to drop, largely because of an increased intake from Greater Manchester (largely from HMP Forest Bank). Lancaster Farms has developed employment links with Greater Manchester (GM), and has positive news on GM employment, but the issue is with accommodation. A housing contract is needed for GM prisoners, or Population Management should stop sending GM prisoners. This has been raised at regional level.
- 7.5.3 The departure lounge is an interesting innovation to support prisoners on release and help with practical details (SIM card, benefit account, etc). Support is given to try to smooth the journey from prison to outside life (e.g. prisoners due for release are set up with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) so they can apply for support. Release mates, which runs the departure lounge, has been called 'a breath of fresh air' and bridge the gap between custody and community, where there is a clear need for support. Resettlement is still the job of the prison and release mates can support by offering an ear to listen to the men.
- 7.5.4 Work continues to be done to match prisoners with external job opportunities. Encouraging the men to make appropriate course choices helps improve their employability, as does running courses linked with well-known companies that will have jobs to offer. Recycling Lives continues to be an example of support that is valued by prisoners and helps with resettlement. There are now Traffic Management and Self Employment courses in the prison that aims to give prisoners a new and exciting employment future.

8. The work of the IMB

The Board has maintained a regular presence at the prison. At the start of the reporting year, only two people were experienced IMB members; and, by March 2023, three new members were undergoing training and mentoring. However, by the end of the reporting year, five members were undertaking monitoring visits and three new members undertaking training/mentoring. Having more members has enabled the Board to establish more thorough thematic monitoring.

Prisoners were able to contact the Board by paper-based applications throughout the year and, at the beginning of 2023, via a national freephone telephone service. The Board can respond to prisoners using the 'Email a Prisoner' system, but rarely used this in 2023-24. Overall, the Board notes that the total number of applications received was almost 30% lower than that in the previous reporting year.

During the reporting year, the Board received much support from prison staff. We wish to thank staff for their support at Board meetings and in addressing most issues raised in person by Board members. A new Board clerk was appointed during the year who has given the Board much support, for which we are grateful. During the first part of 2023, Board members had a timetabled slot at each monthly induction programme for new staff.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	4
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	159
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line	0
Total number of segregation reviews observed	3

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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	13	10
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives, sanctions	20	12
C	Equality	16	13
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	14	9
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	3	0
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	19	3
F	Food and kitchens	10	13
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	33	28
H1	Property within this establishment	37	27
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	14	8
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	10	10
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	26	26
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	17	6
K	Transfers	30	11
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	36	19
	Total number of applications	256	180



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