



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Leyhill**

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

**Published July 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 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 OPCAT Protocol (Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture) and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 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

- 2.1 HMP Leyhill is a category D open prison, located just off junction 14 of the M5 between Bristol and Gloucester. It is set in spacious, well-maintained grounds with many attractive features. Operational Capacity has been recently reduced to 460 prisoners, housed in three residential units<sup>1</sup>. Most of its facilities were purpose built in the late 20th century. The addition of a 40-bed temporary unit installed during lockdown for isolation purposes is now used for accommodation. Unit C1 remains closed as it failed fire safety inspection.
- 2.2 The prison holds a highly complex group. It is one of only four establishments in the open estate to accept those convicted of sexual offences irrespective of sentence. The number of those held convicted of sexual crimes varies over time and on occasion has been above 65% of the population.
- 2.3 Approximately 44% of its prisoners are aged over 50 years old and 24% are over 60. Approximately 27% of all prisoners have declared some form of disability, some having two or three disabilities.
- 2.4 At the end of the reporting period, there were 63 serving a life sentence, 56 serving an IPP (Imprisonment for Public Protection) sentence and 330 on a determinate sentence. Prisoners needing to show, prior to parole, that they have made progress in their offending behaviour are required to be tested in the community. When this is appropriate and places are available, they are provided with work experience in placements within reasonable travelling distance of the prison.
- 2.5 In addition to the significant number of members of the public contributing to the life of the prison in a wide range of voluntary roles, during the reporting period a variety of support to prisoners was provided by the following organisations:
- Career information, advice and guidance: Prospects
  - Personal development, social and life skills, and work-related learning: Weston College, Wayout TV/Way2learn, Prospects and CF03.
  - Benefits and appointments on release: Department for Work and Pensions.
  - Qualification support: Weston College, Open University.
  - Specialist prison leavers employment support: New Futures Network - Industries and Employment Support,
  - Specialist veterans support - SSAFA, the armed forces charity; WWTW, Walking with the Wounded; CAC, Care after Combat.
  - Bank accounts: Nationwide.
  - Healthcare services: Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.
  - Mental health services: Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Integrated Mental Health & Substance Misuse Team.

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

- Lobster Pot day centre for older prisoners: Resettlement and Care of Older ex-Offenders and Prisoners (Rehabilitation Culture Community Interest Company)
- The Homeless Prevention Team (HPT)
- Family service providers of visits and casework: Pact (The Prison Advice and Care Trust)
- Prodigal Arts
- Changing Tunes
- Hardman Trust
- Escort services to and from the prison: GEO Amey

### **3. Key points**

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

Leyhill is in a transitional phase, having demolished old residential units while not yet having new buildings constructed. This means that a higher percentage of the reduced Operational Capacity of 460 prisoners has been required to fulfil the demands of internal work and keep the establishment running so that fewer prisoners have been available for external work. This situation will be closely monitored in the forthcoming months.

In the last year, a noticeable focus has been placed on meeting the needs of the elderly and disabled who make up over 50% of the Leyhill population.

Due to the pressure on the closed estate, Leyhill's occupancy rate has been above 99% towards the end of the reporting year. The increasing prison population and limited number of spaces in the open estate has resulted in Leyhill accepting prisoners who would normally be placed in other open establishments.

Plans for increasing the Operational Capacity continue to be developed. Rapid Deployment Cells (RDCs) housing 92 are planned to be installed in the forthcoming year. Two phases of 120-bed units are expected to be installed within the next 18 months.

The IMB and prison staff have concerns about the changing population demographic of Leyhill, moving from a predominantly older population, convicted of sexual offences, to one that is younger, on shorter sentences and with far fewer sentenced for sexual offences. The change in demographics is regularly providing a challenge in all areas. The number of drug finds has increased over the year and the substances seized has often changed. Cocaine, cannabis, Subutex and ketamine finds have increased. Anabolic steroids and syringe finds have continued to increase towards the end of the reporting year. Alcohol finds increased significantly over the Christmas period.

The number of known OCG (Organised Crime Group) members has increased in the last year from 33 to 42.

#### **3.2 Main findings**

##### **Safety**

The safety of prisoners, in a wide range of areas, is discussed and monitored by a group made up of staff and prisoners who meet on a regular basis. The care shown for vulnerable prisoners has been evident in meetings attended by the IMB [4.0].

Self-harm incidents have been few in number and are well-monitored [4.2] and there were no serious incidents.

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

Fair and humane treatment of the prisoners is evident in the extensive use made of the Samaritan-trained 'Listener' scheme [7.4]; in the provision of both Children's and Family Days for prisoners [7.4]; and by the CIC (Community Interest Company) manager who has been taking vulnerable prisoners out on Day Release [7.3].

The chaplaincy has done much to contribute to the life of a caring community, with its provision of spiritual and pastoral support to those of all faiths and none, in particular for those in difficult circumstances [5.5].

The lack of APs (Approved Premises), which a large percentage of Leyhill prisoners require before they can be released, results in delays to release dates which is unjust and unfair. [7.3].

Nearly all of the 56 men on IPP sentences remain in prison beyond their indicative tariff date. The IMB regard this as deeply unjust particularly as Parliament has recognised that the sentence was unjust in the first place [7.3].

### **Health and wellbeing**

An unannounced HMIP/CQC inspection provided many positive comments on healthcare. Staff were praised for good leadership with skilled and caring staff [6.1].

Prisoners have been encouraged to take responsibility for their own healthcare by holding most medications in their own possession and by their enthusiastic involvement in the Health Improvement Group [6.2].

Waiting times for healthcare services are in line with the community and it is noted that prisoner feedback gives more compliments than complaints.

The health and wellbeing of the elderly and disabled prisoners, who constitute over half the prisoner population, has been enhanced by the provision of table tennis, indoor carpet bowls, and pitch and putt [6.5]; by special sessions for the elderly and self-isolating (often disabled) prisoners in a quieter room on their own in the over-50s centre [6.7].

### **Progression and resettlement**

A new strategy for coordinating Education, Skills & Work in order to reduce reoffending and enhance prisoners' employability is commended. Courses provided will equip prisoners with transferrable skills. Completion of the course on some occasions results in interview for employment toward the end of sentence and on release [7.1]. Market gardens, which supply the prison with vegetables for part of the year, and an ambitious scheme of recycling are among the many areas of work in which men are purposefully employed within the prison [7.2].

Much of the work of the former Community Rehabilitation Company has been taken on by CFO3 with a particular focus on removing barriers to employment for those imprisoned on IPP sentences [7.2].

The process of risk-assessing those prisoners applying for ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) has been streamlined and has enabled more prisoners to take up external work placements. However, prisoners' progress towards parole has often been slowed by delays caused by the external probation service [7.3].

While the lack of APs remains a cause of justifiable frustration for prisoners, a positive development has been the signing of a contract with the HPT (Homeless Prevention Team) which enables prisoners to be found temporary accommodation on release [7.3].

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

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

- What action will the Minister take to remedy the lack of spaces in Approved Premises which leads to many prisoners facing incarceration beyond their release dates?
- What action will the Minister take to raise the food budget in line with inflation?

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

- What further action will be taken to speed up the release and resettlement in the community of the prisoners serving IPP sentences, many of whom have spent far longer in custody than recommended in their indicative tariffs?
- What steps will be taken to speed up the work and enhance the efficiency of the COMs (Community Offender Managers) in the external probation service?
- Will the Prison Service install in-cell telephony and communication as provided in the majority of the closed estate?
- Will the Prison Service increase facilities and staffing levels in proportion to the proposed rise in operational capacity?

#### ***TO THE GOVERNOR***

- The Board urges the Governor to build on the continued improvements made in the ROTL process.
- The Board urges the Governor to maintain the current standards at Leyhill in the forthcoming refurbishment, upgrade of facilities, challenging expansion project and installation of RDCs (Rapid Deployment Cells).
- The Board urges the Governor to continue to seek ways of increasing the number of prisoners gaining external work experience.

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

The work of the Offender Management Unit has led to a marked improvement in processing ROTL paperwork, especially in the risk assessment of prisoners, so that more of them have become available for work in the wider community.

- The number of applications to the IMB regarding the OMU has reduced by 75%.
- The installation of ramps for disabled access in Ash Unit.
- Installation of telephone booths on Ash Unit.
- New appointment of Head of Education, Skills and Work.



## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

The Safer Custody group, made up of staff and prisoners, has met quarterly in the past year. Most participants have attended the meetings at the prison, while a few staff have utilised teleconference facilities. The view of the IMB is that the group has remained focused and aware of the impact of the regime on prisoners' safety. Areas covered include Challenge, Support and Intervention Plans (CSIPs), Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCTs), debt, relationships, social care, the Pathway Enhanced Resettlement Service (PERS), transgender prisoners, self-harm etc.

The IMB has attended Safety and Intervention meetings, which have exemplified the care and humane treatment of prisoners who are, or may be, vulnerable, give cause for concern or who may need a watchful eye or other assistance.

During the calendar year 2023, 113 prisoners were transferred back to closed conditions, 83% for 'security reasons'. The previous year had 126 transferred back with 78% for 'security reasons'.

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

Late arrivals at Leyhill continue to create difficulties for prisoners, prison officers and healthcare. On occasion, prisoners have arrived after healthcare staff have left the site, so they cannot be screened until the following day.

A passport-style scheme with stamps was implemented by Reception. It is used to identify which induction modules have been completed by incoming prisoners and which still need to be completed. Newly arrived prisoners have expressed satisfaction with the induction process, which allows them a two-week period to familiarise themselves with the layout of Leyhill (with the help of fellow prisoner orderlies). New arrivals are provided with a letter from the chaplaincy, with contact details should they wish to speak in confidence with a member of the team. A weekly meeting on Wednesdays is also held with each new arrival. Reception orderlies continue to provide reassurance for recently inducted prisoners. The prison management surveys new arrivals (via the Prisoners' Consultative Committee) on their first-night experience.

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

The number of self-harm incidents and ACCT documents opened has remained very low (19 ACCTs involving 17 prisoners compared with 22 ACCTs for 20 prisoners during the previous year). However, there were 13 separate incidents of self-harm, involving eight different prisoners - four of whom required hospital treatment. The most common reason for an ACCT document to be opened was thoughts of self-harm. There were no worrying trends in the ethnicity or ages of the prisoners concerned, or of the prisoners transferred to closed conditions. Quality assurance checks on ACCTs have been routinely carried out by staff and the IMB, and any shortfalls have been addressed. There were, unfortunately, four deaths in custody, all from natural causes, although three of these occurred in a care home or hospital. There were no discernible trends, although all were aged over 50 and three had disabilities.

The prison's 'GOBOFF' scheme, which enables prisoners to talk with a Samaritan-trained prisoner, a Listener, for emotional support, was used on average over 950 times per month. The scheme continues to provide a useful conduit for prisoner issues.

Of concern is the number of complaints involving 'intimidation' and 'bullying' of vulnerable prisoners by those who are not imprisoned for sexual offences. There is a wide-spread belief, held by both prisoners and staff, that the changing demographic (i.e. fewer imprisoned for sexual offences and more mainstream offenders) of the prison population has contributed to this change. Security staff have occasionally identified individuals causing such discontent and have removed them to closed conditions. This has improved matters but, apparently, only temporarily. Those imprisoned for sexual offences has reduced from over 65% to 52% in January 2024. If, as expected, they continue to decrease in number, the prison will need to monitor the effect on prison life.

In January 2024, 56% of prisoners were under 50 years old; 67% were serving sentences of over four years, 7% were serving sentences under four years; 14% were serving life sentences, and 12%, IPP sentences.

The safety telephone hotline, which is a method whereby family members outside can raise concerns with the prison, was monitored daily by the duty governor.

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

The number of violent incidents at Leyhill has remained low with only six incidents during the year, as opposed to 13 incidents in the previous year. Following a review of a serious incident in the previous year, the IMB had been concerned about the inability of prisoners to raise an alarm. The prison has implemented regular checks of the alarm buttons located on the landings to ensure that the modules are reset and available for use.

CSIPs are used to manage prisoners who are violent, pose a heightened risk of being violent or who may be victims of violence. Both perpetrator and victim are managed and supported on a plan with individualised targets and regular reviews. No significant trends have been identified.

#### **4.4 Use of force**

The use of force is very rare at Leyhill with only 19 incidents this year (there were 34 in the previous year) with none being recorded as serious. Force has been used disproportionately more on the 30-39 age group, 42% from this age group compared to 23.8% of population as a whole. Each incident is reviewed by the prison management, and most were when rigid handcuffs had to be applied when removing a prisoner back to closed conditions. There were 7 violent incidents, but none were categorised as serious.

PAVA spray (similar to pepper spray and used to temporarily incapacitate someone) is now available for use on night shifts.

#### **4.5 Preventing illicit items**

The nature of substance misuse varies and has often been linked to newly arrived prisoners. Targeted searches and subsequent transfers to closed conditions have resulted in a more settled prison. However, the IMB and prison staff have concerns

about the changing demographic of Leyhill, moving from a predominantly older population convicted of sexual offences to one that is younger and on shorter sentences, and with far fewer who are sentenced for sexual offences.

Mandatory Drug Tests (MDTs) have detected more drugs as the year progressed with Buprenorphine (Subutex) being the most common, followed by cannabis, ketamine and cocaine. There have also been regular discoveries of syringes.

Staff make regular use of the Mobile Phone Detector (MPD) equipment which, over the reporting year, has detected numerous mobile phone signals (an average of 30 per month). Most of these have occurred at night and, with fewer staff on duty at that time of day, the prison is unable to follow up and investigate the source of the signal. Day use of mobile phones has increased. Most mobile phone discoveries have been through random searches of common areas. Finds have increased to an average of seven phones and related items per month

Drugs and associated equipment finds have increased to an average of 10 per month. Finds through the year included cannabis, cocaine, subutex, pregabalin and ketamine. Injectable anabolic steroid finds have increased significantly.

Alcohol finds including hooch and distilling equipment finds are currently averaging up to four times per month. Over the Christmas period there was a significant rise in empty alcoholic drink bottles finds. An alcohol-testing device has been installed and 10% of prisoners returning to the prison after ROTL are now randomly selected and tested. There have been few positive tests.

Pornography finds have also increased.

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

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

The refurbishment of the toilets and showers was completed during the previous reporting year and snagging issues have been largely resolved. However, there are areas of mould in some recesses, especially in one where there is not an opening window to provide ventilation. The cleanliness of the toilets and showers largely relies on the dedication of the prisoner cleaner on the wing. Some appear to be spotless whereas others are dirty. Not all are regularly inspected, as they should be, by prison officers. The IMB observed that the corridors and communal areas were not as regularly patrolled as they might be.

The planned installation of fixed furniture in all rooms has been completed in Ash & Beech Units. Furniture is fixed in standard positions so that each room has an identical layout. In the event of a fire this greatly assists the emergency services when searching a smoke-filled building.

New ramps have been installed in one of the units providing wheelchair access to more rooms. Installation awaits final inspection before they can be used.

Access to telephones for prisoners in all units continues to be an issue. There is no in-cell telephony on any of the units. Prisoners on Ash & Beech Units use common shared telephones with PIN access. The demand for telephone use at peak times generally means queuing and often results in dispute and a lack of privacy.

Prisoners on Cedar Unit can only use the telephone located in C1 Block which is locked and out of bounds after 8pm. Access to a telephone ensures that prisoners maintain contact with their family. This is not comparable to prisons in the closed estate and it is often viewed as a negative by prisoners when transferred to Leyhill.

The kitchen manager has had a challenging year, with the cost of food rising sharply while his budget remained static at £2.32 per prisoner per day. Also, the kitchen equipment has suffered from numerous breakdowns with spares having to be sourced on occasion from abroad. Due to his religious dietary needs one particular prisoner's daily meals cost between £20-£25 to provide. Fresh vegetables have continued to be supplied by the prison's market gardens, but prisoners often complained (via the prisoner food forum) about portion size. The kitchen was also one of the most complained about subjects to the 'GOBOFF' scheme. The kitchen did suffer from staff shortages but an increase in wages has gone some way to address this with a now more stable workforce. Kitchen staff were complimented on the Ramadan and Christmas meals. Such religious festival meals have been provided, where possible, in consultation with the Governor and the chaplaincy.

The Leyhill Grounds café was open to the general public (being outside the gate but still on the prison estate) and was managed by a Prison Service employee and overseen by the kitchen manager. The facility opened most weekdays and was staffed by prisoners, thus providing a valuable development opportunity for prisoners. It allowed them to engage with the general public whilst learning some retail and hospitality skills. The cafe had received excellent reviews from customers but, unfortunately, had to close at the end of the year due to retirement. The prison plans to reopen the cafe later this year.

The gardens at Leyhill came 5<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in the national RHS/Prison Service Windlesham Trophy for the “best-kept prison garden”.

## **5.2 Segregation**

There is no segregation unit at Leyhill but there are holding cells which are typically utilised to detain prisoners for a brief period before transfer back to closed conditions or during a room search.

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

Prison officers have been tasked with having a meaningful, monthly conversation with each of their allocated prisoners and recording the salient points as part of the Personal Officer Scheme. These entries are reviewed by more senior staff. About 60% of the prison population have received a monthly entry on their record from their personal officer, an improvement on 48% the previous year. Prisoners have expressed very mixed views about the scheme:

- *“He doesn’t see me except to say hello”*
- *“He has time for me, is a really good officer and will act on any problems”*
- *“Been here 8 weeks and not had a talk”*
- *“He sees me regularly, usually weekly”*
- *“I’ve been here 7 weeks but never had a chat”*
- *“There’s been no P.O. on West Lower since the last one left two months ago”*
- *“Been here five weeks and am satisfied with OMU and conversations with my PO.”*
- *“He’s regular and I can see him anytime.”*

The IMB has often observed caring behaviour by prison staff when dealing with vulnerable prisoners e.g. when they have received bad news from outside. The Armistice Day celebrations, displays, and service, which were very impressive, showed great co-operation between the staff and prisoners. The IMB often attends adjudications and regularly finds they are conducted both fairly and sensitively by the Duty Governor.

The IMB is pleased to report a decrease in prison staff having less than two years’ service than the previous year (21% this year; 25% in the previous year). However, staff are still occasionally being loaned to other prisons under the detached duty scheme. A New Colleague Mentor was recruited but only served a few months before being transferred to HMP Bristol whose need was deemed to be greater (they had a greater number of new officers than HMP Leyhill). The prison says this situation is unlikely to change this year.

## 5.4 Equality and diversity

Within the reporting period there was an unannounced inspection of HMP Leyhill by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and their findings mirror the mainly positive findings in our report as detailed below.

There were 56 Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) completed by prisoners and staff in the reporting year, a modest increase from last year's 52. Of these DIRFs, 17 were submitted for alleged prisoner-on-prisoner discrimination, 28 for alleged discrimination by staff, 10 showed no evidence of discrimination and 1 was withdrawn. Of the 10 redirected to the complaints process, two found evidence of unintended discrimination and five were proven. Scrutiny panels met to ensure that DIRFs were answered both correctly and promptly.

The overall quality of DIRF responses remains very good. All of those submitted during this reporting period were completed within the specified timescales with an average response time of 2/3 days. In the last two months, Disability accounted for 60%, Race 30% and Age at 20% (some fell into two categories). Prisoner-on-prisoner DIRFs accounted for 40% and prisoner-on-staff accounted for 50%. Of these, four were submitted for alleged prisoner-on-prisoner discrimination, and five for alleged discrimination by staff, of which four showed no evidence of discrimination. Of the ten redirected to the complaints process, four found evidence of unintended discrimination and two were proven.

At the end of the reporting year, a breakdown, by age, of prisoners at Leyhill revealed the following:

Age group:	21 years to 29 years	50	11.2%
	30 years to 39 years	108	23.8%
	40 years to 49 years	95	21.2%
	50 years to 59 years	90	20.1%
	60 years to 69 years	68	15.2%
	70 plus years	38	8.5%

Focus groups were held bi-monthly for each of the protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act). At the end of the reporting year, White: Eng/Welsh/Scot/N Irish/British accounted for 358 prisoners (78.8%) and there were 25 Black/Black British: Caribbean (5.5%), with other race and ethnic groups making up the rest of the population. At the end of the reporting year there were three foreign national prisoners, three transgender prisoners, 14 gay/lesbian prisoners and 18 bisexual prisoners. The prison continued to discuss and actively engage with issues of race and ethnicity in regular equality and diversity meetings.

At the end of the reporting year, 126 of the prison population declared disabilities. 298 prisoners with no disability information were entered on the National Offender Management Information System (p-NOMIS), 103 of them as having mental illness. A further 48 had reduced mobility. Those with a disability attending the gym were slightly under-represented whereas those attending Education were over-represented, 35.4% compared to 27.7% of the population as a whole. Those with a disability were under-represented in unsupervised work: 16.6% compared to 27.7% of the population.

There are currently three transgender prisoners, all of whom have been supported throughout the year by the equalities team.

At the end of the reporting year there were 36 known military veterans in the prison. They have been supported throughout the year by SSAFA (the Armed Forces charity). Regrettably SSAFA have confirmed they are stepping away from their volunteering for the foreseeable future. They have advised any prisoners who require support from SSAFA to contact them upon release. Both CAC (Care After Combat) and WWTW (Walking with the Wounded) have stepped in to pick up from SSAFA.

Each year 'Walking home for Christmas' is an activity that sees a group of staff, prisoners and volunteers walk ten miles from a nearby town back to Leyhill to raise money for homeless veterans. This year, £700 was raised for WWTW. In June, the Armed Forces Day celebration raised £250 that was split between CAC and WWTW.

Of the 41 Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) documents that were opened in the reporting period, 56% were for prisoners with a recorded disability and 9.7% related to veterans. At the end of the reporting period there was an over representation of the 30-39 age group on ACCTs.

Equality and diversity are the specific responsibility of a custodial manager, whose job is to support the equalities officer and to assure the dedicated lead that all aspects of equalities and inclusion are managed effectively in accordance with the prison's strategy. All of one officer's time was ring-fenced for equality issues. Diversity and equality action team meetings have been chaired by the Governor on a bi-monthly basis. They are attended by the heads of residential services and the equalities team, various representatives from the prison, including prisoners, and external agencies.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The chaplaincy team, headed by the managing chaplain, is staffed by members of different faiths, including Church of England, Roman Catholic, Free Church, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Jehovah's Witness, Quaker, and Pagan

The chaplaincy caters for all faiths and veganism. It provides adherents with congregational services where possible, one-to-one faith and pastoral support. Religious festival meals were provided in consultation with the Governor. Several funeral services were conducted for Leyhill prisoners, with the chaplaincy providing support for prisoners in their grief.

The chapel is open every day until 7.30pm and is well used for a wide range of spiritual, wellbeing and social activities, including regular film, quiz and games nights, and music classes. The chaplaincy is prominent in prison life and highly regarded by prisoners and staff. There is good access to weekly communal worship, study classes and religious artefacts.

Faith facilities are excellent with a centrally located, pleasant and well-equipped chapel, a separate multi-faith room and a mosque with ablution facilities. The outdoor Buddha Garden and Pagan grove offer peaceful areas for private contemplation and worship.

The chaplaincy has done much to contribute to the life of a caring community, with its provision of spiritual and pastoral support. The team has nurtured prisoners in their faith and wellbeing in many ways. In particular, the chaplaincy team has supported prisoners in difficult circumstances, such as when a child is severely ill.

The chaplaincy now employs a sessional chaplain to focus on resettlement. This person liaises with dioceses, mosques and other faith communities in order to link up prisoners who are about to be released and wish to be part of a faith community on release. There is also a chaplain who is willing to support those leaving soon to deal with any last-minute issues that may have arisen. These initiatives undoubtedly make for more successful re-integration into the community.

Recent events have included an interfaith week with a day focusing on how faith communities can be more inclusive, one of the elements of which was to hold a LGBTQ-affirming Christian worship service at the end of the day.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

A review of the incentives scheme took place during this last year resulting in the enhanced level 2 stage being removed. Previously the incentives scheme rewarded prisoners for good behaviour; now such good behaviour is expected to be the norm and incentives are removed for poor behaviour. The scheme is reviewed regularly.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The number of complaints submitted by Leyhill prisoners did not change significantly throughout the year. The most complained about areas were the OMU followed by Residential and Other. Property complaints from Leyhill prisoners have reduced significantly this year.

Complaints received from other establishments featured Property as the most common followed by Canteen and then recategorisation.



## **5.8 Property**

The transfer and storage of property has continued to be a source of frustration for staff and prisoners. The Board welcomed the introduction of the Prisoners Property Policy Framework in 2022 which sought to address the issues regarding storage by the application of volumetric control. The policy states that a prisoner's property must fit into two standard storage boxes with a maximum weight of 15kg each. There are exemptions which are not included in the volumetric limit. The policy has not been fully implemented at Leyhill and evidence suggests a similar approach at other prisons. A recent transfer had 17 bags plus large items. The contractor transporting prisoners is only contracted to transport three bags per prisoner. Excess property is often transported at a later date. Movement between prisons, sometimes coupled with overnight stops and bags transferred at a later date, regularly results in property being misplaced.

The volume of property stored at Leyhill is already greater than the design capacity of the storeroom, but a new storeroom is planned as part of the prison's future expansion.

There is an inordinate amount of time spent by prisoners, IMBs at various locations, and Prison Service staff attempting to locate property in different locations. This often results in a claim being processed by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

The number of applications to the IMB regarding property at Leyhill has reduced significantly this year and the Board is pleased to report that the amount of property stored is gradually reducing.

The property transfer arrangements at Leyhill and other establishments continues to cause concern for the Board.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Healthcare at Leyhill is provided by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, who also provide cover for Erlestoke, Ashfield and Bristol prisons. The contract started in October 2022 and took a while to settle. However, over a year later, all seems to be running smoothly. The department is open and accessible from 07:30 – 17:30 Monday to Friday and 07:30 – 12:00 at weekends and Bank Holidays.

In June, an unannounced full HMIP/CQC inspection was carried out over three days. The feedback was mostly very positive, with comments on good leadership, skilled and caring staff, effective communication and good access to healthcare through the daily triage clinic. Things of concern were that some of the AHP (Allied Health Professionals) services, in particular Physiotherapy, Podiatry and Optician had long waiting lists (the last two now much improved) and that the Mental Health team were stretched but offering a responsive service based on patients' needs.

On arrival at Leyhill, a prisoner has a first screen induction session with both Physical and Mental Health staff in Reception. A second screen induction follows a few days later where they receive information via PowerPoint and are given an information pack.

Physical Health have two vacancies which are being covered by agency staff until new appointments can be made (expected April) and Mental Health has one vacancy.

The HIG (Health Information Group), which was a forum for prisoners to air any healthcare concerns, never really got going post-Covid. Instead, the Head of Healthcare meets with the Prisoners' Consultative Committee monthly so that any issues can be brought to their attention.

The Physical and Mental Healthcare teams have become actively involved with the cases of prisoners on ACCTs as soon as they are opened and continue to be involved in reviews and assessments.

There is a very good relationship between Healthcare and the prison as a whole. As an example, the monthly Safety and Interventions meeting is well attended by a cross section of senior staff. This meeting looks at where prisoners may need extra support, for example those in debt, in a relationship with another prisoner, finding it difficult to settle in open conditions, or on an ACCT (usually where there has been risk of, or actual, self-harm). The Healthcare team is also pro-active, raising concerns about prisoners which may escalate.

The Palliative Care Unit (PCU) closed in 2022 as reported previously. In place of this, a local care home was able to accommodate three terminally ill prisoners this year.

Complaints are few and very often to do with medication changes deemed appropriate by medical staff but hard for prisoners to accept. All complaints are investigated with few being upheld.

A new way of eliciting feedback from the prisoners, the Patient Experience Survey, has been introduced this year. The survey asks what went well and what could be

done better. This has a monthly target response of 5% from those eligible to respond. There has been a sustained increase in the number of responses received and, more significantly, in the number of compliments and expressions of praise received. This has been particularly pleasing as previous surveys had elicited far fewer compliments.

Answers so far suggest that the service is meeting the needs of prisoners. Over a two-month period, nurse-led services noted that very little could have been done better. Comments about what went well have included: “very reassuring to know that my problems are being sympathetically and professionally addressed”; “best healthcare I’ve come across”; “always listen to me”. Comments about what could be done better have included: “Open on weekends”; “Timescale, I have been suffering a few months.....however, I understand the amount of work the Healthcare Team do”; “Nothing could have been done better” (in reference to medicines management i.e. prescriptions and pharmacy).

There were four deaths in custody throughout the year. All deaths were recorded as from ‘natural causes’.

## **6.2 Physical healthcare**

Healthcare provision continues to be at or above the level which may be found in the community. The staff provide an efficient and caring service which is appreciated by prisoners. However, the number of DNAs (Did Not Attend) have been rising in the second half of 2023. The numbers suggest that most of those missing appointments are from the 30 – 49 age group. Whilst this is wasteful of time and potentially detrimental to health, the situation is mirrored in the community and is difficult to resolve.

Some externally provided services have caused concern this year, notably physiotherapy, podiatry and optical services. Funding has been agreed for more physio sessions. There is a lack of availability which is being addressed. Podiatry also suffered from lack of staff but is now much improved while optical services have been enhanced through an arrangement with a local Specsavers branch.

Throughout the year vaccinations have been made available to the prisoners. Of those eligible, 87% accepted the Covid vaccination and 72% the flu vaccine by the end of December. Other vaccinations offered were Hepatitis A and B, and MMR, following the increase in disease activity countrywide, where 26 of 43 eligible accepted the vaccination.

For the past year, a diagnostic scan, ‘Fibroscan’, has been available to prisoners at Leyhill in order to identify problems with the liver such as fibrosis and fatty liver. From Spring 2024, another investigative procedure to examine lung function and identify lesions using low dose CT will be offered. There are 177 eligible prisoners.

Health promotions throughout the year have included diabetes awareness, bowel screening information and a MacMillan coffee morning with a substance misuse recovery talk by an ex-user. ‘Pride’ was celebrated with information and advice available on sexually transmitted diseases and blood-borne viruses.

The Health Bar, Leyhill’s in-house pharmacy shop, has continued to be popular for those wanting self-care items to keep in their rooms.

Secondary care comes almost exclusively from Southmead Hospital in Bristol.

It is not unusual to have a prisoner as an in-patient which may necessitate a bed-watch. The IMB has not been aware of any issues in securing staff for this role.

### **6.3 Mental health**

Mental health care is also provided by Oxleas and is split into two separate areas, Substance Misuse and Mental Health. This year has seen the appointment of a Psychologist and an Assistant Psychologist.

Mental Health offers three levels of aid:

- low-level, such as self-help routes and information
- group therapies
- one-to-one sessions

Groups include Understanding My Mental Health, Anxiety Awareness, Low Mood and DBT (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy). Additionally, a psychiatrist is available every two weeks.

Substance Misuse falls into two areas:

- Clinical, run by Oxleas, such as for prisoners who arrive on opioid substitution therapy (Methadone)
- Psychosocial, under Change, Grow, Live, for which group therapy is often appropriate

Groups include Foundation of Recovery and Smart Recovery plus one-to-one sessions. Prisoners acting as peer mentors, of whom there are currently three, help with group sessions and are useful to the other prisoners as someone to talk to in time of need.

Referral to the Mental Health services can be made by anyone within the prison. Waiting times are considerably better than those within the community and generally prisoners are contacted within a week.

### **6.4 Social care**

Social care is provided, via South Gloucestershire Council, by Agincare. Few Leyhill prisoners require social care with only four prisoners being visited at time of writing. However, disability orderlies are available for the less-abled prisoners to assist with day-to-day non-personal help.

### **6.5 Exercise, time out of cell**

The extensive grounds continue to be a huge asset to Leyhill and are well-used. As well as the opportunity for walking, there is a large field available for activities such as Parkrun and football. Other ideas for using the space are currently being discussed.

In the gym, there is a continued focus on elderly prisoners, which is just under half of the population. There are four 'retirees' sessions a week and the staff work with the Lobster Pot (see 6.7) to arrange particular sessions e.g. outdoor bowls. The full range of activities include Couch to 5K, boules and walking football as well as a focus on healthy eating and wellbeing. The increasing popularity of the gym amongst

younger prisoners has led to changes in the gym regime so that the needs of all prisoners can be met. The objectives of these changes are yet to be fully realised. However, as well as usual gym activities, there are more relaxing sessions of yoga and meditation. Healthcare referrals to the gym are available and fall into the categories of Remedial and Wellbeing.

The allotments at Leyhill have been extended so that much more has been grown this year. Raspberries, gooseberries and strawberries are grown in the communal area and a wide variety of vegetables in the individual plots. There are higher boxes, which are easier to maintain, for those with restricted mobility and smaller, hand tools. Work on the allotments undoubtedly contributes to health and wellbeing, rehabilitation and progress towards resettlement.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

This service is provided by Change, Grow, Live (see 6.3).

## **6.7 Soft skills**

The Lobster Pot, a well-resourced drop-in centre for the over-50s, and for younger prisoners for whom access is considered to be beneficial by special arrangement, is very popular. Prisoners can drop in for a tea or coffee, get advice on hostels, play board games, read the papers and much more. Lobster Pot personnel often accompany anxious prisoners on RDR (Resettlement Day Release). The Lobster Pot also provides loan of coats and bags for prisoners on day or overnight ROTL.

There are organised games sessions on the accommodation units which include chess club, bridge and darts.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

The HMIP report on Leyhill, which was submitted in September 2023, expressed concern that 'The provision of education, skills and work was not of sufficiently high quality and did not equip prisoners with the skills they need to gain employment on release'. While the Quality of Teaching & Learning was commended, the inspectors were not favourably impressed by the provision of Purposeful Activity and felt that the prisoners were not sufficiently challenged by some of the courses.

A subsequent Action Plan required the Heads of Reducing Reoffending (HoRR), Education, Skills and Work (ESW) and the education provider (Weston College) to respond by October/November 2023. Leyhill responded quickly and expressed support for the Learning and Skills (L&S) team. The latter provided statistical analysis for a quality assurance team which now meets monthly. It is now planned to dovetail all statistics from the above groups, including industries and work outside Leyhill. Evidence of success will be accessible to all those within the QIG (Quality Improvement Group), as will areas which require greater focus (see below).

A few months earlier, a new member of staff had been appointed to Head of Education Skills and Work to manage & oversee a more coordinated approach to Learning and Skills (L&S), Work Experience (WEX), Reducing Reoffending & Resettlement and to monitor the quality achieved in these areas. The manager is responsible for the line management and development of staff within these areas and for the creation of a culture of high expectations, taking action when performance is unsatisfactory. In particular, they are responsible for ensuring that a culture of employment is maintained within the prison and has to account for prisoner outcomes in relation to employment while at Leyhill and after release. There is now a new emphasis on working with employment stakeholders and networks, the fruits of which will be monitored in the coming months.

One priority area being looked at is the interface between L&S and WEX. Some prisoners had not reached level two in English and Maths, which was the requirement when applying for jobs. Leyhill has begun to trial shorter Maths lessons for challenged or reluctant learners. This has the added benefit of impinging less on prisoners' work commitments. Even more significant, an in-depth screening assessment has been initiated by L&S in order to identify whether prisoners have 'reached their potential' even when it is lower than level two. All new prisoners are subject to Reference Screening within the first three days of their course. WEX is now in a better position to ensure that the least academic prisoners are able to secure work once it has been recognised that they may have reached their full potential. It is too early to assess the impact of this change.

Another issue that has come to the fore is that staff in Resettlement have expressed frustration that the prison has not been able to offer prisoners courses at their required level, for example in Forklift & Warehousing and Carpenters shop skills where Leyhill is on its third round of recruiting instructors. Prisoners transferred to Leyhill, expecting to be able to complete certain courses before release, have been disappointed to find such courses are not available. Painting & Decorating has remained extremely popular. This course and the tutor were praised by HMIP. The Essential Digital Skills course, very popular amongst older prisoners, has been

accredited by Gateway this year. A new Professional Craft Cookery tutor is now in place and has 'hit the ground running' and is proving to be popular. The funding system puts teachers under pressure because an illness means that others have to cover the classes, even if there is only one course member, or money is lost.

The L&S outreach work to support weaker learners in the workplace has not happened as intended, mainly due to the lack of tutors.

It has been a challenging year for staff recruitment. The Level 2 English tutor was not appointed until August, so the course had been run by the head of L&S. There have been three unsuccessful rounds of recruitment to find a tutor for the Construction course.

A new Reading Strategy, called 'That Reading Thing', was launched in August and involves both the Library and L&S. Prisoners who are Reading Champions lead prisoner-focused reading groups in the library and a new category of 'emerging readers' are taught on a one-to-one basis. Currently four prisoners are identified as such. The Shannon Trust is part of this initiative as is the prison service which provides Way Out TV and Way2 Learn TV. All classrooms and the library now have magazines with a higher reading level while there is a wide range of books available in the library for all prisoners. It is a well-used resource and the prisoners running the library are positive about their work and very helpful to fellow prisoners. Local information is also available in the library e.g. with notices on jobs, meetings, the OMU and from the Governor.

20 prisoners have been enrolled in distance learning and are studying degrees with the Open University. 30 prisoners are on other distance-learning courses. A sample of courses includes: Sustainability, Economics, Global Development and Business. Some distance learning courses are fully funded through the Prisoners' Education Trust (PET) and have to be completed in 12 months.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

Courses leading to a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) have been run in:

- \* Warehouse and Storage (prisoners supported by L&S tutors) taught in DHL.
- \* Performing Manufacturing Operations
- \* Manual Handling
- \* HGV course (for two prisoners) and forklift course (CFOB qualification); both of these are funded by the DWP.

The Woodworking course was discontinued as the building was deemed to be unsafe. An Employability Level 2 course and a course in self-employment had been planned for this last year but did not happen.

Vocational courses run by L&S have included:

- Creative Craft Cookery Level 1
- Painting and Decorating Level 2 & Basic Skills
- Employability Skills Level 1 & 2
- Health and Safety in the Workplace

- Functional Skills in English Levels 1 & 2 (61 enrolled on Level 1, 62 on Level 2)
- Functional Skills in Maths Level 1 & 2 (56 on Level 1, 78 on Level 2)
- Essential Digital Skills (accredited by the Gateway organisation)
- Distance Learning Courses (usually 20-22 prisoners)
- Independent Living Skills
- Sustainability and the Green Environment (Level 2 C&G award)
- Food Safety in Catering Level 2

The majority of those of working age are employed inside the prison. The biggest employer is DHL, where on average 40 prisoners have been employed in packaging and supplying goods for other prisons. Other internal workplaces include the kitchens, market gardening, recycling, laundry (which serves five prisons and external contracts), woodwork and printshop.

Market gardening employs 13 to 20 prisoners during the year. They grow seasonal vegetables and bedding plants for seven prisons: Leyhill, Bristol, Eastwood Park, Exeter, Usk and Prescoed. However, 95% of what the gardens produce is consumed within Leyhill. In August they produced 930 kilos of fruit and vegetables. They believe there is the potential to increase the output should they have the resources to do so. The £15k budget has to cover fertilisers (which have doubled in price), 20 tons of compost for growing potatoes, sprays against greenfly and other chemicals. There is thought to be a significant external market for their produce. Training is all internal. There used to be qualifications available from the education department, but there are currently none on the curriculum. It is felt that there is potential to offer more formal training, qualifications and, consequently, increased employment potential.

Recycling employs 30 prisoners. Some are involved in recycling DVDs and CDs which are brought in from suppliers, charity shops, retail outlets etc. The cardboard is removed from the packaging, the plastic cases separated into coloured or clear with the DVD's/CD's separated. All this is put into individual crates, which are then collected from Leyhill. The prison receives waste cardboard, plastic and paper from Bristol and Eastwood Park prisons as well as its own. This waste is separated, baled and collected in return for payment. A similar arrangement also operates with scrap metals.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Stores employ 12 prisoners, which is now fully staffed, and have two forklift drivers including the high-lift tele-handlers. There are three different types of forklift truck, each requiring a separate course. Further training has been requested but has not materialised. If there is not a forklift truck driver available then the Stores has to close. There are several large contracts being fulfilled: for MoJ paperwork, the printing of T-shirts and printing logos on hi-vis jackets, the latter to satisfy an order of 400,000, and 10,000 for Police County Services. The Stores also disperse thousands of books given free from a charity named 'Bang up Books'. All are new and include children's books which are distributed during family visits in other prisons.

### **7.3 Offender management and progression**

Leyhill is a resettlement prison meaning the prisoners are understandably focused on securing parole. This process can be time-consuming, particularly because risk



assessment has necessarily to be much more rigorous in a prison which has a high proportion of high-risk prisoners.

The IMB continue to have concerns regarding progression to parole and availability of Approved Premises. The implementation of various schemes to enable early release of prisoners has resulted in an increased workload for the OMU and reduced availability of Approved Premises. Communication with Community Offender Managers (COMs) due to their increased workload and staff shortages has also resulted in delays.

The OMU reported in July that they had seen another decrease in staffing levels due to unforeseen circumstances, main summer leave period and a temporary restructure of the Senior Management Team. Since then, the OMU has taken on some new staff and, despite continuing pressures, the OMU say they continue to “rise to the challenge” and have seen a significant rise in the ROTL figures through the reporting year. At the end of the reporting year the OMU were fully staffed. By November 2023 the ROTL figures had increased to 2,256 which is the highest for any month in the year. The ROTL figures for between February 2023 and January 2024 are shown below:

ROTL applications:

February	1,694
March	1,866
April	1,726
May	1,866
June	1,980
July	1,950
August	2,088
September	2,102
October	2,213
November	2,256
December	1,862
January	1,883

Following suggestions by prisoners that communications could be improved, thereby reducing the number of ROTL board enquiries, the OMU met with the Prisoners’ Consultative Committee (PCC) representatives in July 2023. It was agreed that the OMU would implement a policy whereby an individual notification would be completed and posted to the prisoners informing them what stage their ROTL board had reached. In January 2024 the PCC reported that there had been an improvement in the ROTL process in recent months. This was particularly noticeable in the shorter time it took between a prisoner putting in an application and receiving the confirmation.

Over 93% of the enquiries of those prisoners attending the ROTL surgeries have related to ROTL and ROTL board dates.

The Board are pleased to report that the OMU remain focused on adapting to the ever-changing requirements of the prison service and increasing ROTL.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

Prisoners' communication with their families is supported in a number of ways, including social visits, ROTL, secure social video calling and a telephone subsidy (of £5 a week to a maximum of £40). Use was also made of 'Email a prisoner', a system whereby an individual, such as a relative, can communicate with a prisoner. The former sends an email to the prison and, after vetting by security, it is sent on, in hard copy, to the prisoner. The latter can then reply, if he wishes, again subject to vetting by security.

The secure social video calling service gives the prisoners the experience of being at home and has thus been invaluable in supporting prisoners on the path to resettlement. However, it was often only available for one day per week due to staff shortages. The charity Sixty-One delivered Christmas parcels for each prisoner. These parcels are greatly appreciated, especially by the many prisoners who have no contact with anyone outside of the prison environment.

#### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

In February, Resettlement reported that, overall, 85% of prisoners were employed on internal or external work. The remaining 15% were either retired or long-term sick. Commendable as it has been to see the high proportion of prisoners in external work, this has, unfortunately, resulted in a shortage of prisoners available for the internal work required for the day to day running of the prison. This problem has been exacerbated by the demolition of two accommodation blocks and subsequent reduction in prisoner numbers.

There has been a rise in the number of prisoners available for working out as a result of the reduction in the number of prisoners convicted of sexual offences, down from 266 in May to 235 in January. The number of prisoners with non-sexual offences rose from 176 in March to 221 in January. It is widely acknowledged that it is easier to find work placements for those prisoners with non-sexual offence convictions.

However, in March, the Work Experience department (WEX) acknowledged that they had lost some external work placements due to the lack of available transport. In July, it was reported that some work parties had been cancelled and a small number of new work placements were delayed as a result of these shortages. Furthermore, with more prisoners working out, there has been a shortage of drivers and, in August, WEX reported that a lack of drivers meant they had been unable to supply prisoners for some outside companies where there were vacancies available. In the latter part of the year, WEX had two staff vacancies and this affected their ability to visit current and potential new employers. A variety of factors delayed prisoners' opportunities to work out and has indirectly had an adverse impact on their release dates.

Prison Offender Managers (POMs) work with external probation officers called Community Offender Managers (COMs). There is a shortage of the latter and as a result their workload has increased significantly. Delays incurred in eliciting

information from COMs have led to delay and postponement of ROTL Boards within Leyhill. The IMB continues to be concerned that these delays can limit a prisoner's ability to demonstrate their progress to the Parole Board and suitability for early release.

In November, at a meeting with the IMB, the new Governor acknowledged that the number of prisoners engaged in outside work was still very low, as compared to other Category D prisons. The IMB were fully in agreement, as external work enables prisoners to demonstrate their progress to the Parole Board and thus to achieve an early release. Recently, however, members of the Prisoners' Consultative Committee (PCC) have expressed optimism about the Governor's drive to secure more external work placements. At the end of the reporting period, a course with Betaris started training prisoners to construct rail track. It involves both classroom-based work at Leyhill and external work. Prisoners will be offered interviews and possible employment on successful completion of the course.

The IMB have been very impressed with the work of the Lobster Pot in supporting prisoners and reported in June that it continues to respond reassuringly to the many questions surrounding resettlement and parole status. The Lobster Pot has helped to find accommodation for prisoners on release and to secure bus passes. In September the IMB reported that they were dealing with questions to do with probation and life outside prison including necessary skills required and support available. In the words of one prisoner "The Lobster Pot is a godsend".

The IMB continue to be concerned regarding the unfairness of the situation of IPP prisoners, many of whom at Leyhill remain in prison beyond their indicative tariff dates. It commends the reduction in the number of IPP prisoners from 65 to 56 this year. However, the OMU felt they had dealt with the easier cases and releases may be slower from now on. At the October IMB South Study day held in London, participants asserted that they regard the treatment of IPP prisoners as deeply unjust particularly as Parliament has recognised that the sentence was unjust in the first place.

The lack of Approved Premises (APs) continues to be an area of concern. In February, the approved premises central referral unit was unable to fulfil its duties sufficiently in allocating APs to low- and medium-risk prisoners on release. This has meant that, in the previous six months, 20 prisoners had been released from Leyhill with No Fixed Address (NFA). The Governor stated in November, that he was "Getting a similar story from other prisons" and there appears to be no quick or easy solution. It was reported in December 2022 that the Resettlement Directorate had commissioned the third national Community Accommodation Service (CAS3) to help resolve the problem of homelessness on release. Unfortunately, prisoners continue to be released with no fixed address. Lack of accommodation on release makes successful resettlement in the community less likely.

Towards the end of the reporting year a 92-year-old was released from Leyhill. The prisoner had no accommodation allocated to him until the point of release. The prison had been unable find suitable accommodation for the individual. The council will not provide housing until the prisoner has been released and does not have anywhere to live. The prisoner was extremely concerned prior to being released and believed that he would be homeless. The accommodation was provided on the day of release by the local council as he was officially deemed to be 'homeless'.

The OMU reported in August that high-risk prisoners who are required to attend rehabilitation courses at their APs may have their courses cancelled if accommodation cannot be found for them. This also results in further delay to release.

Lower-risk prisoners are less likely to secure accommodation in APs as high-risk prisoners are given priority.

Recently implemented schemes for early release often require accommodation in APs. This reduces the availability of APs to other prisoners on RORs (Resettlement Overnight Release) and delays progression to parole.

Pressure on the closed estate and implementation of further early release schemes can only increase the workload for the Probation Service and Offender Management Unit and decrease the availability of Approved Premises.

The Board are concerned that availability of APs to a recently released prisoner in close proximity to family members can significantly affect their resettlement.

## The work of the IMB

- There were 270 visits in 2023/2024 compared to 197 in 2022/2023.
- The Governor, senior members of the team and staff have all been cooperative and supportive of the Board. The Board awaits appointment of a permanent IMB Clerk. The Business Hub have provided support where possible with a reduced number of staff. This results in an increased workload for Board members and an inconsistent approach.
- Board meetings were held monthly at Leyhill with some Board members choosing to attend by teleconference or MS Teams. The annual team performance review was held in November 2023.
- A weekly rota has been maintained throughout, with members in regular contact with staff and each other. A weekly report is prepared, with a copy sent to the Governor. There has been regular contact between the Governor and the Board Chair.
- Completed discharge surveys have been reviewed and analysed to identify any trends.
- IT access following the system upgrade continue to provide challenges for Board Members.
- One member transferred to Leyhill in March.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	11
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	270
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line*	n/a
Total number of segregation reviews observed	n/a

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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	0
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	1	2
C	Equality	3	3
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	2	1
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	1	0
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	0
F	Food and kitchens	1	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	3	5
H1	Property within this establishment	0	0
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	6	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	2
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	23	5
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	5	4
K	Transfers	0	0
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	6	4
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>31</b>



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