



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Stafford

**For reporting year
1 May 2023 – 30 April 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 Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

Located at the edge of Stafford town centre, during the period of this report HMP Stafford

- was one of the oldest fully operational prisons in England and included several Grade II listed buildings
- was a category (cat) C training prison
- was for people (men) convicted of sexual offences
- had a certified operational capacity of 753 prisoners*

[* Figures included in this report were local management information. They reflected the prison's position at the time of reporting but may be subject to change following further validation. Therefore, they may not always tally with official statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.]

The prison included seven residential wings with most cells accommodating two prisoners. Each wing had in-cell sanitation and a shower block. Except for four cells in B wing, in-cell showers were only available in the newest wing (G). One wing (D) was used for induction, to accommodate the healthcare centre and the Support and Separation Unit (SSU). G wing also accommodated the Special Care Unit (SCU) used to house prisoners who required specialist 24-hour medical care.

The outside environment was exceptionally clean and tidy, supporting exercise yards, an Astroturf pitch, two pétanque pistes, many flower beds and beehives. Outside areas were further enhanced through murals painted by the prisoners.

Brookside Cabin and garden provided a separate area for older prisoners (Senior Support Group – SSG), enabling indoor and outdoor activities, as well as facilities for relaxation and socialising.

Significant workshop space was provided for employment.

Fulford's Bistro, which provided catering for staff and visitors, was managed by prisoners, and enabled them to gain catering qualifications.

Unity 7 supplied refreshments for prisoners, Barista training courses, a charity shop and meeting place for many clubs. In the process, this enabled prisoners, who had no experience of them, to become familiar with cashless payment systems.

Within the establishment many voluntary organisations supported the prisoners. These included the Samaritans (prisoner support and training for Listeners*), Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), who run the Visitors' Centre, Lincolnshire Action Trust (resettlement), the Shannon Trust reading plan "Turning Pages" and Chaplaincy volunteers, including Official Prison Visitors.

[* Listeners - prisoners trained by the Samaritans to act as their on-site, and importantly, face-to-face proxy]

3. Key points

During IMB monitoring visits prisoners at HMP Stafford frequently commented that it was a safe establishment, where they were fairly and humanely treated and their health and wellbeing needs attended to.

The Board was conscious that when this Annual Report was published, HMP Stafford will have had a different Number One Governor in place for each of its last 4 publications. This has been remarked on by members of the Senior Leadership Team, not with regard to the quality or effectiveness of any Governor, but as a consequence of the amount of churn constant change "at the top" has brought about. Despite this, as the prisoners themselves state, the prison remains a calm, safe place; testimony to the work done by the staff and the ethos they have developed within the prison over time.

Another continuing theme, of this and previous reports, was the presence of legionella within the water supply of the prison. In a time of low funding the Board

was saddened by the amount of money and time that had been spent testing for, eradicating, and then flushing the system following a legionella outbreak. This was also, and remains, a major inconvenience for both prisoners and staff.

However, as this work was not a consolidated cost, in that testing and eradication were in different budget “pots” to that of system flushing (and that of the provision of temporary mobile showers), the total spent to date may never be known and comparison with provision of the solution (mains water supplies to the affected areas) could not be made. Fortunately, there has not been a reported case of any person being infected with legionella.

Although there was some improvement in the level of staff shortages, there was still an impact on the “normal” running of the prison, that resulted in lost activities (e.g. social video calls) and wing closures caused by a mixture of

- staff illness
- bed watches
- unscheduled (i.e. emergency) hospital visits
- detached duty directives

It is understood and appreciated that the staffing resource of HMP Stafford was much better than many other prisons, which explained the requirement placed on it to provide staff for detached duty. However, from the prisoners’ perspective there was little understanding and empathy when they were locked in their cells for issues at prisons far removed from them and for reasons not of their doing.

Credit must be given to the staff on duty at such times as they managed prisoners’ frustration extremely well such that there were no significant disturbances as a result, as monitored by the Board directly and through the Apps* submitted by prisoners.

[* An App (Application) is a form, or verbal report, prisoners submit to the IMB to formally draw attention to a particular concern or complaint they may have.]

As of April 2024, HMP Stafford accommodated 24 (3.2% of its total population) prisoners convicted with an IPP (Imprisonment for Public Protection) sentence. Having been abolished as a sentence type in 2012, continued failure to address the release requirements of those prisoners so convicted leaves them frustrated, with no hope and, rightfully, a feeling of total injustice. A situation that HMP Stafford staff have dealt well with but on the grounds of humane and just treatment must be resolved by those with the power to do so, which lies outside the remit of the prison.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Compared to other similar establishments, HMP Stafford remained a low risk, safe prison. This was to be commended and reflected the hard work of the prison staff and, as stated by the prisoners themselves, the fact that persons convicted of a

sexual offence felt safer when housed in a prison designated specifically for such offences.

4.1 Reception and induction

Induction appeared well managed and prisoners who experienced it delivered many positive, and no adverse comments to the Board. Regular reports from the Insiders* supported this conclusion with the majority of prisoners reporting they felt much safer at HMP Stafford than at other establishments and that the staff were supportive.

[* Insiders – prisoners selected to help new arrivals adjust to the prison and inform them of the processes and procedures]

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The table below contains the monitoring data delivered monthly to the Board, by the Safer Custody team, aggregated over the 12 month period of this report.

Category	2022-23 Report Totals	2023-24 Totals	Monthly Average	Trend
Self-harm	105	131	11	↑
ACCTs*	150	160	13	↑
Adjudications	450	671	56	↑
Deaths In Custody	12	5	NA	NA
Violent Incidents	24	12	1	↓
Use Of Force	81	57	5	↓

[* ACCTs – Assessment Care in Custody, Teamwork – documentation/planner for those prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide]

The Board had a standing invitation to monitor all Safer Custody and Use of Force meetings, which included the viewing of body worn camera footage.

Due to the presence of the Special Care Unit (SCU) and its delivery of palliative care, deaths in custody will always be relatively high at HMP Stafford. Of the 5 deaths during the reporting period 4 were expected, or appeared to be of natural causes, with one possibly being self-inflicted.

Self-harm incidents increased from 105 in the previous period to 131 during this one, with the most common method of self-harm being cutting. This increase was believed to have been impacted by the transfer-in of several prisoners who had a well-documented history of prolific self-harm in their previous establishments.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Violent incidents halved during the reporting period (see table).

Adjudications increased from 450 in the 2022/2023 period to 671 in 2023/2024. Whilst this was significant there was no evidence of them being inappropriate or targeting particular individuals and was thought to have reflected the slight increase in younger prisoners (N.B. young in either age, prison experience or both) and a return to a more normal turnover.

It was reassuring to note that during the current reporting period there was only one reported incident of an assault by a prisoner on a member of staff, whereas previously it had been 8.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force decreased from 81 in the previous reporting period to 57 in this one, with no use of PAVA (Pelargonic Acid Vanillylamide) or batons. The use of cuffs also reduced from 57 to 45 in the same time period.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

For many years, HMP Stafford has had the reputation of being a prison with a very low-level drug problem. The Board had become aware of a suggestion that there was an increase in illicit substances entering the prison via incoming mail, which was negated by the post room staff. Mail continued to be regularly screened by both the drug-sniffer dogs, and an electronic scanner introduced (lonscan, which detects trace amounts of narcotics) in the latter part of the year.

The MDT (Mandatory Drug Testing) annual results shown below, with an average number of random positives of only 2.5 per month, evidence the statements that HMP Stafford was a prison with a very low-level illicit drug issue.

MDT Annual Report April 2023 - Mar 2024	Totals
Random Samples	455
Risk Samples	95
Suspicion Samples	88
Frequent Samples	54
Reception Samples	32
Total Samples	724
Refusals	7
Weekend testing	207
Random Positives	30
Random Consistent with medication	12

It was hoped that changes to the prison officer regime, specifically with regard to the detailed staffing of the medication hatches, to be introduced after the writing of this report, will further reduce the low level of prescribed medication trading between prisoners.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The establishment was kept remarkably clean, tidy, and fresh looking, which for a building of its age was testimony to the hard work and creativity of all involved.

In the Board's previous Annual Report much was made regarding the state of the roadways throughout the prison and the impact that these could have on health and safety, especially for those in a wheelchair. It was pleasing to note that some work had been done in the worst areas. However, more work remained to be done and further work had been created by previous repairs sinking and needing renovation (e.g. Crescent exercise yard).

Shower refurbishment and legionella outbreaks continued for all of the reporting period that negatively impacted, at different times, those prisoners who did not have in-cell showers. During a monitoring report in early March 2024, it was observed that only 63% of prisoner showers were working across the estate. However, this figure did rise to 75% when further monitored two weeks later.

The installation of in-cell phones was completed much to the satisfaction of all prisoners.

Increased clothing availability for prisoners was delivered through the charity shop located within Unity 7, which, in the process, generated significant donations for charity.

Food, as in previous reports, was praised by the prisoners and the extra menus made available at times of religious festivals, and for those on special diets, was appreciated by the vast majority. The impact of the cost of living increases on food budgets was highly significant, resulting in reduced menu choices and the restriction in the availability of some items, e.g. eggs. The Board remained in awe of the ability of those involved with the delivery and management of food provision in the prison, given the ridiculously low level of daily prisoner budget allocated, to achieve such success.

5.2 Segregation

When compared to other establishments, the Segregation and Separation Unit (SSU) at HMP Stafford was small as it contained only 3 cells, which reflected the overall safety and good behaviour of the prisoners. In addition, the SSU was often unoccupied and rarely were all 3 cells in use at the same time.

Prisoners seldom spent more than 48 hours in the SSU and were returned to the residential wings as soon as appropriate.

The prison routinely notified the Board when a prisoner was transferred to the SSU, which ensured we were able to visit them as soon as was possible.

It should be noted that the prison did not always inform the Board, in a timely manner, that a rule 45* hearing was scheduled, or that the time of it had been changed, which significantly limited the ability of the Board to monitor them.

[* Rule 45 – the removal from association of a prisoner either in their own interest/own protection or in the interests of good order or discipline]

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The Board received daily information regarding the targeted number of key worker sessions and outcomes. During the year prison management pressure was maintained to increase both the number and quality of such sessions, with much success. Where targets were not met then the explanation was invariably staff shortage resulting from unplanned events such as emergency hospital visit escorts.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The Board was pleased to note the ongoing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I) from the Governor and Senior Leadership Team. A quarterly ED&I meeting was held and attended by the Governor and other senior leaders from across the prison with ED&I prisoner representatives also in attendance. Monthly ED&I data was collated across all 13 strands (e.g. Disability), which allowed trends to be monitored. Each strand had a lead from within the prison, who was supported by prisoner representatives who had the opportunity to attend forum meetings.

The ED&I team continued to take a proactive approach to their role and held a number of activities throughout the year including a National Coming Out Day, a Trans Remembrance event, events throughout Black History Month, and a Walking In Their Shoes event, which provided the prison community with an opportunity to find out what it was like to live with a physical disability. A quarterly newsletter “All Things Being Equal” was produced and available throughout the prison and promoted the work of the team. The Catering Manager continued to support cultural and religious festivals and awareness events with the development of special menus.

The ED&I Hub was formally opened by Lord Michael Cashman CBE on 31 July 2023 and has welcomed around 1000 visitors since then. The Hub was a community space, open to anyone within the prison who would like to know a little more about equality and diversity or may require advice or support. The Board welcomed the development of this facility, which reinforced the support for ED&I at HMP Stafford.

The Board was supportive of the increased focus on the needs of neurodiverse prisoners at HMP Stafford. This included neurodiversity training for staff, and an inclusive neurodiversity awareness event. A Neurodiversity Support Manager was appointed to promote the five priorities that underpin the Neurodiverse Framework, these being “Sharing of information,” “Training staff,” “Developing environment,”

“Individual targets for prisoners” and “Preparation for release.” Whilst supportive of this increased focus on the needs of neurodiverse prisoners, the Board were concerned that given 40% of prisoners, at least, at HMP Stafford were neurodiverse, the one off budget allocation of £1500 was insufficient to support this important area and required review.

Prisoner data (information correct as of April 2024)

Prisoner Profile		
	Numbers	% of Population
Total Prison Population	746	
IPPs	24	3.2
Lifers	36	4.8
Foreign Nationals	34	4.6
Care Leaver	41	5.5
Transgender pathway	10	1.3
Incentives Policy (IP) Levels (as of 30 April 2024)		
Enhanced	558	74.5
Standard	186	24.8
Basic	5	0.7
Ethnicity Profile		
White	638	85.5
Asian	56	7.5
Black	33	4.4
Mixed	15	2.0
Other	1	0.13
Not stated	3	0.4
Age Profile		
18 years to 24 years	22	3
25 years to 29 years	56	7.5
30 years to 39 years	200	26.8
40 years to 49 years	139	18.6
50 years to 59 years	143	19.2
60 years plus	186	24.9
Disability Profile		
Disability	350	46.9
No Disability	283	37.9
Not known	113	15.2

- when compared to the previous year’s Annual Report, there were no significant differences in the prisoner profiles
- 44.1% of the prison population were classed as elderly

Staff data

	March 2024	
Age Range	Number	Percentage
16-19	2	0.6
20-24	13	4.0
25-29	31	9.4
30-34	42	12.8
35-39	30	9.1
40-44	26	7.9
45-49	24	7.3
50-54	38	11.6
55-59	61	18.5
60-64	53	16.1
65-69	7	2.1
70 and over	2	0.6
TOTAL	329	100

- compared to the previous year's Annual Report, there were no significant differences in the age profile. The total staff number had reduced by 13

DISCRIMINATION INCIDENT REPORT FORMS (DIRFs)				
		LAST YEAR TOTAL	THIS YEAR TOTAL	DELTA
DIRFs	Submitted	52	83	+31
	Prisoner vs Prisoner	24	18	-6
	Prisoner vs Staff	25	37	+12
	Prisoner vs Regime/Prison	3	16	+13
	Staff vs Prisoner	0	12	+12
STATE	Proven	19	19	0
	Unproven	29	49	+20
	No outcome (withdrawn by complainant)	4	15	+11
	Pending	0	0	0
STRAND	Gypsy, Roma and Travellers	1	1	0
	Gender Re-assignment	11	8	-3
	Veterans	0	1	+1
	Disability	10	17	+7
	Race	16	32	+16
	Religion	3	17	+14
	Sexual Orientation	12	7	-5
	Age	0	0	0

When compared to the previous reporting period there was a 59.6% increase in the number of DIRFs submitted

These variances raised the question as to “Why?” and was answered by the following actions that took place during the reporting period

- a large increase in DIRF training for staff and prisoners that resulted in a greater awareness of the DIRF process
- DIRF training performed internally and hence highly focussed to the needs of the prison and prisoners
- Supplementary DIRF training was provided by the Zahid Mubarek Trust (ZMT)
- external scrutinisation of the DIRF process by ZMT and by Staffordshire University, with the result that ZMT cited HMP Stafford as operating good practice and Staffordshire University reported that the DIRF recording, investigation and administration was highly effective
- quality assurance checks completed by the Governor

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Prisoners of HMP Stafford were, as in previous years, well supported by members of the Chaplaincy both in terms of delivery of faith events and pastoral support. No Apps were submitted regarding the Chaplaincy, but many compliments of their work were noted.

5.6 Incentives schemes

As per last year Lammy Review meetings took place throughout the period of the report, following the recommendation of the initial Lammy review, which was as follows:

- Chapter 5 PRISONS – Recommendation 24:

To increase the fairness and effectiveness of the Incentives Policy (IP) system, each prison Governor should ensure that there is a forum in their institution for both Officers & Prisoners to review the fairness & effectiveness of their regime. Those from Ethnic Minority backgrounds & White Prisoners should be represented in this forum. Governors should make the ultimate decisions in this area.

Greater use of the IP levels was made during the period of the report, but HMP Stafford remained unusual in the percentage of prisoners who achieved and maintained the enhanced incentive level (e.g. 74.5% as of the 30 April.)

5.7 Complaints

During the reporting period there were 1693 complaints, which included Comp1 (initial complaint), Comp1a (appeal to the response provided against the initial

complaint) and Comp2 (confidential complaint). This was 46% higher than the number (1161) of complaints in the previous year.

Of the 1693 complaints, 378 (22%) were upheld by the establishment.

The main areas of complaint related to property issues, which amounted to 194 complaints, representing 11% of the total.

Once again, the Board wished to acknowledge the efforts of the staff in ensuring that an effective system for tracking complaints was in place. The Board often needed to review specific complaints and the details of these were provided swiftly. This enabled the Board to communicate with the prisoner more promptly and thoroughly and the Board were satisfied that the responses to the complaints were answered in a polite and timely manner. They were aware, however, that the responses were not always to the satisfaction of the prisoner making the complaint.

5.8 Property

The number of Apps received regarding property issues remained relatively high at 32 (21.2% of all Apps). Those regarding property within the prison, rather than on transfer, often concerned clothes that had gone missing, or items kept in store. These were usually more resolvable than those involving property that had gone missing during prisoner transfers, a known national issue, sadly, not helped by the lack of interest from the “sending” prison once a prisoner had been transferred out.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

In the HMIP/CQC Inspection of March 2021, comments were made regarding the state of some of the healthcare consulting rooms as they were not 100% fit for purpose.

The NHS England Quality Visit of February 2023 stated:

- On the whole Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) standards were acceptable but we noted some areas that required improvement for example descaling of sinks and replacement flooring and doors to cupboards.

During a Board monitoring visit in early March 2024, it was observed that there had been little change, other than perhaps a worsening of the situation (as a result of the issues arising in the dental suite) since the NHS England visit, so impacting on the ability of the healthcare team to properly deliver their duties.

[N.B. Recent notifications outside the period of this report indicate that steps have now being taken to rectify some of these issues.]

6.2 Physical healthcare

In our Annual Report of two years ago severe criticism was applied by the Board to the management of medicines within HMP Stafford by the provider, Practice Plus Group (PPG), with the Board finding it necessary to escalate issues to the appropriate national bodies on more than one occasion. The situation now could not be more different and positive.

Against a monthly average number of prescriptions totalling 3187 (over 4 prescriptions per month per prisoner), of which 72% were held by the prisoners in their own possession (IP), in the month of February 2024 only 7 complaints were submitted by prisoners concerning Medicines Management (8 in March) and these were mainly due to medications being changed following a review by the GP.

Automated Traka dispensing lockers were installed and were working well for 3 wings (A, B and C) so reducing the amount of time prisoners had to queue for their IP medication. An improvement appreciated by all.

The Board also much appreciated the help provided by PPG staff in resolving/addressing the healthcare related Apps submitted by prisoners.

6.3 Mental health

The Samaritans, either directly or through their training of the Listeners provided a continued invaluable service, as they have done for many years. This work, along with ACCT recognition and delivery, and the work of the mental health specialists meant that prisoners with mental health issues were well, and quickly, supported.

6.4 Social care

HMP Stafford, given its age and the nature of its buildings, has never been somewhere that easily adapted to the provision of all the social care services and equipment that was required by prisoners. Despite this it was acknowledged that every step possible was taken to try and deliver the best possible solutions for the prisoners.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

As reported in previous years, staff shortages had the greatest impact on the “normal” running of the prison that resulted in lost activities (e.g. social video calls, clubs) and wing closures, caused by a mix of

- bed watches
- unscheduled i.e. emergency hospital visits
- detached duty directives
- staff illness

It was understood and appreciated that the staffing resource of HMP Stafford was much better than many other prisons and hence the requirement/directive placed on it to provide staff for duty in other prisons (detached duty). However, from the prisoners' perspective there was little understanding and empathy when they were locked in their cells for issues at prisons far removed from them and for reasons not of their doing.

Credit must be given to the staff on duty who managed prisoners' frustration extremely well, such that there were no significant disturbances as a result, as monitored by the Board directly and through the IMB Apps submitted by prisoners.

6.6 Soft skills

All involved with the delivery of Rehabilitative Culture across the prison, both staff and prisoners, worked tremendously hard to deliver information and events for the benefit of all prisoners, which was recognised in many reports as being extremely successful.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

When compared to other prisons in the West Midlands Region, the Board noted that Novus (the main contractor at HMP Stafford), supported by Prospects Training, continued to deliver an extremely good service and positive outcomes, with few complaints/issues and much praise from the prisoners.

Evidence presented to the QIG (Quality Improvement Group) gave countenance to the fact that prisoners made very good progress, for example

- end of course prisoner surveys regularly reported a +90% satisfaction response
- 100% of learners had a learning plan, which gave them a good understanding of their future pathways
- laptops were used by prisoners within their cells to encourage engagement and learning beyond the normal working day

As of April 2024, 94% of all prisoners were purposefully engaged in education and activities.

The QIG were presented with individual case studies that demonstrated the resulting positive impact on prisoners' development and welfare when intervention by the Neurodiversity Support Manager had taken place.

The historic issues regarding staffing of the library were resolved such that staffing was at full capacity at the end of the reporting period so reducing the sessions lost to prisoners. In January 2024, 94.6% of all prisoners were members of the library. Stocks of books were updated regularly along with the purchase of some musical instruments, which prisoners could borrow. Prisoner-led musical tutoring was very

successful with the outcome being several performances by prisoners taught this way.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Income from on-site industries for the period of this report was £210,295.32 (financial year was £211,349.82), generated from 11 separate contracts, which included 4 laundry contracts. It is important to note that HMP Stafford was one of only a few prisons that did generate income. However, and sadly, the prison did not achieve its pre Covid-19 levels of income and, looking forward, it was felt that they were unlikely to.

The Board acknowledged the tremendous outcomes achieved by both the staff and prisoners associated with the workshops, not just in terms of income but education as well, whilst recognising the difficulty of securing work for prisoners convicted of a sex offence. The only criticisms in this area received by the Board from prisoners were with regard to the level of pay, which they felt was very low when compared to other prisons in which they had served.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Testimony to the effectiveness of the Programmes Team, HMP Stafford was one of three custody sites selected in 2023 to ‘design test’ a new approach to the next generation of Accredited Programmes (APs) currently offered to prisoners.

Subject to final accreditation, this new approach, which commenced in the pilot sites in November 2023, will provide a streamlined AP offer, more focussed to individual needs, and, hopefully, providing better outcomes.

If the trials were successful, it was intended that these new APs would be fully rolled out on a national level, in 2025.

7.4 Family contact

During the reporting year, a new Family Engagement Manager (FEM) was appointed by the management of the charity Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT). Following two resignations of PACT staff, in the summer of 2023, a new full-time FEM was appointed, helped by a new part-time worker. This, and the impetus from a new Head of Reducing Reoffending (HMP Stafford appointee), had led to many positive innovations

HMP Stafford prisoners were from many areas of the country and so visits to the prison could, and did, involve difficult journeys for many visitors/families. It followed that a welcoming separate Visits Centre, available before family days or social visits, was a key source of well-being and support for prisoners and families alike. The centre was well decorated, well-resourced and well-received by young people and visiting families with 86% saying it made their “visit significantly better” and 92%

saying it was “very family friendly”. The centre had a coffee shop and was well stocked with snacks.

Inside the prison, family friendly notices welcomed visitors, and activities, placed on tables within the Visits Hall, were ready for those who wanted them. Breakfast and pre-ordered lunch were available and served by Bistro staff.

During the reporting year, the programme Steps Forward was finally introduced, which aimed to address the fact that there was a significant number of prisoners who received no visitors. The inaugural Steps Forward event was attended by 56 prisoners who were offered refreshments and games. The second event was attended by 70 prisoners, one of whom offered the following feedback to the Board, “I just felt so good after the last time, so I’ve come along again. It’s just the atmosphere. It changed the way I felt.”

At one of the events, a group of 4 prisoners were playing Monopoly and laughing a lot. They all said that they had never met each other before and how good it was to step outside their own cell, wing, and workshop.

It had frequently been reported to the Board how the roll-out of in-cell telephony was greatly welcomed by all (prisoners and families) and enhanced family connections. Sadly, several social video calls (similar to face time) between prisoners and their families, had to be cancelled at short notice due to staffing issues. Something, regretted by the prison staff and a source of great frustration for the prisoners involved.

7.5 Resettlement planning

HMP Stafford was not a designated resettlement prison and hence not resourced accordingly. However, as the data below shows, for the period 01/05/23 to 30/04/24, it was highly effective in providing a resettlement service.

Number of discharges (excluding deportations & Deaths in Custody)	111
Number of bank accounts opened (plus 11 declined)	25
Number of photo ID letters issued	61
Number of debt advice appointments	42
Number of JobcentrePlus appointments	90

These numbers did not do justice to the amount of work required by prison staff to bring about a positive outcome as even something as simple as setting up a bank account could be a major issue for a prisoner with no recognised proof of identity or positive financial history.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

As in previous years recruitment and retention of Board members remained the major issue.

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Number of new Board members in the process of being approved	2
Total number of visits to the establishment	256

N.B. "Total number of visits to the establishment" listed above cannot, and must not, be construed as a proxy for the amount of time each Board member spent on prison matters, as this figure excluded the many hours at home making phone calls, attending to emails, responding to data requests, dealing with Apps, updating Kahootz, etc. This number of visits only directly reflected and related to the amount of expenses paid to Board members.

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	4 (1.9%)	3 (2.0%)
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	7 (3.3%)	3 (2.0%)
C	Equality	1 (0.5%)	6 (4.0%)
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	20 (9.5%)	8 (5.3%)
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	20 (9.5%)	21 (13.9%)
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	9 (4.3%)	6 (4.0%)
F	Food and kitchens	7 (3.3%)	4 (2.7%)
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	34 (16.2%)	26 (17.2%)
H1	Property within the establishment	25 (11.9%)	16 (10.6%)
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	5 (2.4%)	16 (10.6%)
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	13 (6.2%)	2 (1.3%)
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	12 (5.7%)	7 (4.6%)
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	25 (11.9%)	11 (7.3%)
K	Transfers	3 (1.4%)	5 (3.3%)
L	Miscellaneous	25 (11.9%)	17 (11.3%)
	Total number of Applications	210	151

- a 28.1% decrease in the number of Apps year on year from 210 to 151
- Apps relating to healthcare remained the highest number overall at 26 but was to be expected given the GP's actions that reviewed all prescribed medication
- the average response time to an App was 6 days. However, this figure was inflated by the number of Apps that took over 20 days to resolve, due to the complexity of the issues involved
- 128 (85%) Apps received a written response and 32 (21%) a verbal response. Of the 151 Apps, 12 (8%) received both a verbal and written response

Annex A – List of service providers

- Physical health and social care provider – Practice Plus Group (PPG)
- Mental health provider - PPG: subcontracted to Inclusion and MPFT (Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) that together form an integrated mental health and substance misuse service
- Education services - Novus and Prospects Training
- Library services - Staffordshire County Council
- Escort contractor - GEOAmey
- Canteen* - DHL
- Facilities management - Amey plc
- Visits management – Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

[* Canteen – the equivalent of an external shop that exists outside of the prison, that prisoners can order from once a week for items such as toiletries]



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