



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Liverpool

**For reporting year
1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

Published September 2024



Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	4
3. Key points	5
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	11
5. Fair and humane treatment	23
6. Health and wellbeing	30
7. Progression and resettlement	35
 The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	46
Applications to the IMB	47
 Annex A	
Service providers	48

All IMB annual reports are published on www.imb.org.uk

Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and 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 establishment

HMP Liverpool is a category B local adult male prison. It was opened in 1855 and, as a Victorian prison, continues to face many challenges with the infrastructure of the original building. The present short/medium term plan is for the prison to transition from its category B status to category C as soon as possible.

The residential accommodation consists of 10 living units in total, including first night/induction (A wing), care and separation unit (CSU), drug rehabilitation and vulnerable prisoners' units, and a healthcare inpatient facility with 18 beds.

The operational capacity remained at around 800 throughout 2023, with the prison always at, or exceeding, its capacity due to the rising prison population numbers across the northwest.¹ Throughout the reporting year, there has been at least one wing out of use for refurbishment. I wing completed its refurbishment during the reporting year and reopened in April 2023. The refurbishment of K wing began in April 2023 and remained closed for the remainder of the year. It is scheduled to reopen early in 2024 and the prison refurbishment programme is projected to complete late 2025, at the earliest.

Education is provided by Novus. This includes English, maths, art and digital skills, as well as key life skills, such as mentoring and wellbeing. In addition, a range of vocational training courses in several skills are provided, including plastering, painting and decorating, catering, hospitality, gardening, construction and industrial cleaning. There are industrial workshops, including leather goods (for prisons and the public service), laundry (for prisons and hospitality service) and bike repair (for two local charities). Four much-needed additional workshops are scheduled as part of the refurbishment programme, with work expected to commence on these during 2024. There are plans for refurbishment in some of the older buildings, many of which are in urgent need of repair and renovation.

The prison has recently opened a mock pub/restaurant, named 'The Lock Inn', which has been established in partnership with Marston's Brewery. Whilst working in this facility, prisoners can learn hospitality skills and receive accreditation towards City & Guilds qualifications in hospitality and catering.

The prison works in partnership with a range of agencies to help prisoners find employment, education, housing and other life skills on release.

Partners of Prisoners (POPs) and the chaplaincy provide individual support, and Samaritans-trained prisoners act as Listeners to support other prisoners through difficult periods.

The prison has a weights' room, sports hall and outdoor sports pitches, and provides a programme of fitness activities.

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

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

General findings

A new Governor took over in May 2023 at HMP Liverpool and has supported the IMB in raising its profile to the prison staff and prison community, which is welcomed by the Board. A number of changes/initiatives introduced by the new management team are expected to show further improvements by the time of the next annual report.

During the reporting period, the IMB and the prison's governance team have nurtured and developed a professional and transparent partnership, which recognises the independent role of the Board and its work. The Board has been able to extensively monitor many key aspects of the prison's work and the openness shown by the Governor, senior staff and other prison staff has been instrumental in the Board being able to effectively undertake its key monitoring role, despite its low numbers.

The Board believes that the prison has made positive progress in many areas of its work over the last year and is well placed to further support and enhance the fair and humane treatment of prisoners at HMP Liverpool.

Specific findings

Safety

- Increase in reported suicide attempts, self-harm incidents and deaths in custody.
- Increase in violence on both prisoners and staff.
- IMB has, at times, been hampered in the monitoring and oversight of use of force (UoF) incidents, although it is recognised that the prison is making efforts to improve the arrangements in place.
- Increase in UoF incidents, from 270 incidents in 2022 to 334 in 2023.
- Positive progress in the uptake and activation of body worn video cameras (BWVCs), with 78% of UoF incidents captured on them.
- Improvements with regard to security at the main gate, prisoner reception and prisoner visits' reception have been successfully implemented as the reporting year progressed. At the same time, the prison's governance recognises the need for a consistent approach at all times.
- Delays around cell searches and the lack of action on positive drug tests does not help in reducing the availability of illicit items and it impacts on safety.

Fair and humane treatment

- There is an acute lack of accessible cells for prisoners with disabilities.
- Catering team respond to prisoner complaints positively, which may have contributed to a reduction in applications (prisoners' written representations) to the Board about food concerns.
- Referral processes for admittance to mental health establishments and length of stay in segregation (the CSU) for prisoners experiencing mental health illness is of concern to the Board.

- Prisoners in segregation for mental health or self-isolation reasons do not consistently have access to activities that promote positive mental health.
- HMP Liverpool does not routinely invite the Board to Rule 45 meetings (which review and authorise continuing segregation and temporary confinement) and data is not sent to the Board in line with the [Memorandum of Understanding](#).
- All prisoners in the CSU now get a daily regime, which is a positive development.
- Outstanding prisoner complaints from other establishments are a concern to the Board.
- Prisoners' property going missing during transfer between establishments and within establishment is a frequent cause of frustration for prisoners.

Health and wellbeing

- In the Boards view, overall, prisoners' health needs are met.
- The Board feels that the multidisciplinary team approach means that issues for individual prisoners are usually highlighted quickly, with follow-up action and intervention then taking place as soon as possible.
- The healthcare department's leadership team is developing an open, transparent and team-based approach to its work, with improvements evident during the latter part of the reporting period.
- The Board has major concerns about prisoners kept in the CSU who have serious mental illnesses waiting too long for an appropriate hospital bed. There is evidence that prisoners' mental health has deteriorated during their often long stays in the CSU. These concerns are shared by prison management and the healthcare department.

Progression and resettlement

- Educational and vocational training provision for prisoners is satisfactory, with improvements being made, which are enabling the provision to further improve over time. This aspect of the prison's work had become a priority for improvement and the prison has already taken steps to respond to these concerns.
- There has been a recent steer towards accredited rather than non-accredited courses/training, where possible, which will hopefully impact on prisoners' access to work on release. Further work towards providing a wider range of accredited courses needs to take place in industry workshops, including leather, catering, laundry, bike maintenance, gardening, etc.
- The Board remains impressed with the work of the Partners of Prisoners (POPs) team and the arrangements in place for social visits and family contact.
- Resettlement targets are being met, despite obvious challenges around the prison working at, or exceeding, its capacity, with the prison also still taking many prisoners directly from the courts.
- There has been a return to face-to-face contact between professionals and prisoners, which was urgently needed.
- The prison runs a successful weekly resettlement board, which is attended by prisoners who are in the last few weeks of their sentence. A number of

external agencies attend the resettlement board, who offer appropriate support and help such as with housing, banking, welfare benefits, etc.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The Board has repeatedly raised concerns around the inhumane length of time prisoners experiencing mental health illness are kept segregated whilst waiting for transfer to an appropriate mental health establishment. A recent example is a prisoner who spent 377 days in the CSU waiting for a transfer, which the Board view as completely inhumane. What immediate action will the Minister take to address this inhumane practice?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Whilst HMP Liverpool is a cluster death site, with an increase in suicide attempts and self-harm incidents, there does not appear to have been any substantial additional resources for a meaningful period to reduce risks of additional deaths. What resources will the Prison Service provide to HMP Liverpool to ensure that safety for prisoners is improved over the long term?
- Staff absence is still an issue at HMP Liverpool, affecting daily staffing levels and resulting in frequent regime closures for prisoners. What action will the Prison Service take to directly reduce staff absence at HMP Liverpool and eliminate regime closures due to low staffing levels?
- The Prison Service is aware of the inhumane length of time some prisoners have been in the CSU at HMP Liverpool whilst waiting for transfer to an appropriate mental health establishment. What will the Prison Service do to ensure that prisoners at HMP Liverpool are not waiting for inhumane periods of time for such transfers?
- Despite recent reductions in the number entering the prison grounds, HMP Liverpool is known as a 'hot spot prison' for drone activity, which results in illicit items becoming accessible to prisoners. What additional support will the Prison Service provide to explicitly target drone activity at HMP Liverpool?
- There is a lack of accessible cells for prisoners with disabilities at HMP Liverpool. What action will the Prison Service take to ensure that prisoners with disabilities and accessibility needs have appropriate accommodation?
- Prisoners are not receiving responses to complaints from other establishments within the timeframes specified in Prison Service policies. Some prisoners have been waiting for more than two years. What will the Prison Service do to ensure that this inadequacy is addressed and prevented?
- Prisoners' property during transfers is still going missing and is not managed effectively by the Prison Service, despite the updated [Prisoners' Property Policy Framework](#). The Board has raised this issue with the Prison Service for several years through our annual reports. What action will the Prison Service take to eliminate prisoners' property being lost or mislaid between transfers?
- Prisoners would particularly benefit from access to a wider range of accredited skills and services. This would enable them to have a greater chance of succeeding once they leave the prison. What plans does the Prison Service have for ensuring that as many suitable courses and training opportunities are formally accredited to enable a sense of achievement for the

prisoners during their time at HMP Liverpool and to enhance their chances of not returning to prison?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- The Board has raised concerns about resources within safety custody and how this affects prisoner outcomes, such as delays with violence reduction officers visiting prisoners, for example. What action will be taken to ensure sufficient resources within safety custody are available to ensure safety and positive outcomes for prisoners?
- The Board is not notified of all applicable incidents/events in line with the [Memorandum of Understanding](#). In addition, the Board does not always receive the data or meeting invites as it should. What action will be taken to improve this area so the Board can monitor effectively?
- The Board has raised several concerns about monitoring and oversight of UoF incidents. What further action will be taken to improve this area?
- The Board has raised repeated concerns over the lack of access to activities for prisoners in the CSU for mental health or self-isolation reasons to promote positive health. What action will be taken to ensure that such segregated prisoners have appropriate access to activities?
- The Board has raised concerns about prisoners' property going missing between cell moves, particularly when prisoners are relocated to the CSU. What action will be taken to improve this area?
- The Board has been pleased to see the recent improvement in the range and quality of educational, vocational and industrial workshop training provision being provided for prisoners. What plans are in place to further enhance these programmes, e.g. accreditation of more courses, ensuring all courses are full?

3.3 Response to the last report (calendar year 2022)

Issue raised to the Minister	Response given	Progress
Strengthen and enhance legislation to prevent prisoners being segregated for long periods of time, particularly those experiencing mental health difficulties.	The segregation review board will ensure measures are put in place to safeguard the mental health of segregated prisoners, including enhanced observations, dialogue and mental health team input.	No progress despite good support from prison staff and the healthcare team. Some prisoners continue to be segregated for long periods of time, despite obvious underlying mental health conditions.

Issues raised with the Prison Service	Response Given	Progress
The prison will need significant investment to fund facilities and staffing levels that can improve the job prospects and rehabilitation of prisoners. For the prison to develop the capacity as a model category C prison, a	New governance at HMP Liverpool shared the	Despite limited new investment, good progress has been made due to local governance

comprehensive plan to engage partners and fund training will be essential. The Liverpool IMB feels such investment will be cost effective in reducing the number of reoffenders and increasing the number of prisoners ready for work and contributing within the city region.	view of the need to invest and fund facilities to enhance the job prospects and rehabilitation of prisoners.	priorities, particularly during the second half of the reporting period and since the appointment of the present Governor.
Prisoners' property continues to go astray during transportation between establishments. Better communication and clear lines of accountability need to be in place to help resolve issues quickly and efficiently and reduce the distress caused to prisoners.	This is a 'northwest' issue, which has been recognised as needing urgent improvement.	Little progress has been made, with continued issues arising around property being lost or lengthy delays when moving around the wider prison estate.
Develop policy to improve overall sickness and absence rates of prison officers to reduce the level of curtailed activities and programmes across the prison service in supporting better rehabilitation of offenders.	Recognised as a major concern by present governance.	Some good progress to date, with local governance working hard to reduce absence and sickness rates across all staff levels.

Issues raised with the Governor	Response	Progress
Develop a consistent approach to security arrangements at main gate.	Positive response, with senior governance and IMB in agreement.	Good progress has been made to date, with a more consistent approach in place.
Continue to insist on the use of body worn video camera by all on-duty officers.	Agreement that there was a need to improve uptake and use of body worn video cameras.	Good progress has been made, with much-increased usage of body worn video cameras by officers at all levels.
Deploy consistent levels of staffing to the mandatory drug testing (MDT) programme.	Agreement that there was a major problem regarding access to, and use, of illegal substances.	Satisfactory progress to date, although local governance is hopeful of improved access to the MDT programme in the 2024 calendar year
Develop enhanced monitoring of activities within the prison through instilling a culture of	Agreement that more access needs to be available via hybrid	Good progress to date, which has assisted the

hybrid-first approach for meetings so greater attendance at governance meetings is achieved, allowing Board members to also attend crucial meetings remotely (for monitoring purposes).	streams, such as Teams and Zoom.	IMB in their ability to monitor more effectively.
---	----------------------------------	---

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The Board is pleased to report that ‘vulnerable prisoner’ signs in reception have been removed, following repeated concerns that the Board raised about this issue (raised in [2021](#) and [2022](#) annual reports). This provides a more welcoming environment, which removes stigmatisation. The reception area for incoming prisoners continues to be a clean and welcoming environment, with separate areas for different prisoner needs. Prison staff and prisoner workers within reception are open in speaking to Board members about the availability and quality of food. The Board feels the food on offer to be acceptable.

HMP Liverpool was, and continues to be, part of Operation Safeguard (which was activated by HM Prison and Probation Service/HMPPS when total prison estate capacity reached a point that required prisoners to be held in police cells on a temporary basis, as overflow). The number of prisoners entering and leaving HMP Liverpool continues to remain high, particularly for a prison planning on becoming a category C training and resettlement prison. The Board raised concerns in our [last annual report](#) around the low use of the body scanner to detect and prevent illicit items entering the prison via reception.

HMP Liverpool had previously shared that there were insufficient staff trained in the use of the body scanner, which meant that it was not always in operation. The Board has been advised that there are now 43 staff trained to use it. This has resulted in an increase in its use during this reporting year, at a time where illicit items are rife. The Board would urge the prison to fully utilise the resource of the body scanner to further help eradicate the risk of illicit items potentially entering the prison via reception.

The Board has observed a welcoming and professional environment within the reception area for prisoners. The time taken for prisoners to be processed in reception can be extensive. There does not appear to be a correlation between numbers of prisoners arriving each month and the average time spent in reception. HMP Liverpool has advised the Board that the primary reason for delays in reception concerns the healthcare screening. It is usual for only one nurse to be stationed in reception, so when large cohorts of prisoners arrive from courts, particularly late at night, this delays the time prisoners are kept in reception.

Numbers of prisoners entering and leaving HMP Liverpool											
Month	In 2023	In 2022	In 2021	Out 2023	Out 2022	Out 2021	2023 Body Scanner	2022 Body Scanner	2023 Positive Body Scanner	2022 Positive Body Scanner	Average Time Spent in Reception (hours)
Jan	136	297	313	93	299	313	117	193	2	10	2.35
Feb	296	313	386	294	312	398	97	175	0	8	2.55
Mar	326	353	426	335	372	430	146	246	0	13	4.55
Apr	262	325	347	228	316	315	126	161	1	4	3.15
May	288	298	292	291	291	289	127	190	0	12	3.45
Jun	431	290	301	106	284	311	170	143	5	8	3.2
Jul	431	298	226	106	290	220	182	149	2	5	3.2
Aug	458	301	362	263	275	367	179	121	2	5	3.5
Sep	253	422	366	428	283	373	236	188	0	7	3.2
Oct	320	256	405	467	128	407	261	114	0	3	3.15
Nov	300	358	389	277	367	401	277	116	1	5	3.5
Dec	219	400	312	236	272	326	84	97	0	1	4.25
Total	3720	3911	4125	3124	3489	4150	2002	1893	13	81	3.34

The induction wing was relocated from B to A wing towards the end of the reporting period (November 2023) for operational reasons. The Board will monitor the induction wing closely over the next reporting year. The Board has had limited opportunity to monitor prison inductions throughout the reporting year, due to a lack of clarity about when these were taking place. Once the Board was made aware, inductions observed appeared to be comprehensive and supportive to new prisoners' needs and also in offering reassurance to alleviate individual concerns.

As part of raising the profile of IMB to prisoners, the Board has produced information to be given to all prisoners at inductions to ensure they know about the IMB and our role. HMP Liverpool has also supported the Board by agreeing to the IMB having information boards on all wings to promote our role further to prisoners. These are due to be installed during the 2024 reporting period.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

This year has been particularly challenging for both the prison and prisoners alike. The Board has noted a 15% increase in reported suicide attempts and self-harm (SASH) incidents, from 347 in 2022 to 400 incidents in 2023. There has also been an increase in Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened (which are used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide), from 488 to 669, and an increase in constant watches, from 36 to 152 prisoners. Also, sadly, there were seven deaths in custody (DiC) during the reporting year, with three of these occurring within a ten-day period. This resulted in the prison becoming a 'cluster death' site.

Out of the seven deaths, four have been unofficially reported as apparent natural causes and three reported as apparent self-inflicted deaths. It must be noted that the [Prisons and Probation Ombudsman](#) (PPO) needs to complete their investigations

before the causes of death can be confirmed. The three apparent self-inflicted deaths are those that happened within a ten-day period.

During the previous reporting year, the Board was unable to report on the outcome of PPO investigations into three deaths in custody. However, the PPO have now issued their report on two out of three of the deaths, with both being recorded as due to natural causes. Only one action point was made:

'It is not a good use of an ambulance to be called to a prison solely to pronounce life extinct of a prisoner... Governor may wish to consider alternatives to the use of an ambulance.'

The Board has been updated that training is being explored in this area by the healthcare department manager.

Alongside this, police and media attention surrounding a previous DiC have, understandably, impacted on staff morale. The Board is aware that the above has placed the prison under considerable strain, particularly in relation to staffing, whereby high staff absences have affected daily personnel numbers. Prisoners are occasionally locked in their cells for excessive periods of time due to regime closures as a result of low staffing numbers. This, in turn, impacts on prisoner mental health which, in the Board's view, contributes to Suicide and Self Harm (SASH) incidents. The number of lockdowns and temporary regime closures remains a concern for the Board whilst, at the same time, the Board appreciates that safety has to be the driving factor when considering whether a lockdown or closure is necessary at any given time.

For example, the Board has identified, through its monitoring, that out of the 400 reported SASH incidents, no incidents were reported in education, workshops or purposeful activities. Almost all the incidents, apart from four, occurred on the residential wings. It appears that frequent regime closures, with prisoners being kept in cells for extensive periods of time, is impacting on prisoners' mental health and resulting in increased SASH incidents. There were 15 admissions to hospital during the year as a result of SASH incidents.

Throughout the reporting year there were 737 individual contacts made by family and friends of prisoners via the [safer custody hotline](#), where concerns can be raised about a prisoner. This is reviewed by the safer custody team and discussed in safety intervention meetings (SIMs), which usually take place weekly. Whilst the number of ACCTs opened increased during the year, HMP Liverpool did not always involve family and friends in ACCTs where this may have been beneficial. This is a missed opportunity to use potential protective factors, such as family and friends, to support prisoners who are at risk of harm and suicide.

Suicide and Self harm (SASH) incidents					
Month	2023 Self-harm incidents	2023 SASH Incidents Admitted to Hospital	2022 Self-harm incidents	2023 Constant watches	2022 Constant watches
Jan	28	0	23	1	7
Feb	23	3	24	6	1
Mar	33	2	32	9	3
Apr	28	0	30	8	4
May	25	1	28	5	8
Jun	36	3	16	14	0
Jul	43	3	27	15	5
Aug	29	1	37	20	2
Sep	45	1	37	24	1
Oct	41	1	28	20	2
Nov	36	0	47	17	5
Dec	33	0	18	14	2
Total	400	15	347	153	40

ACCTs opened and closed during year						
Month	2023 ACCTs opened	2022 ACCTs opened	2021 ACCTs opened	2023 ACCTs closed	2022 ACCTs closed	2023 Safer Custody Hotline Contacts (i.e., family/friends)
Jan	34	51	56	32	28	72
Feb	28	26	39	20	18	46
Mar	34	39	54	30	20	62
Apr	35	40	50	32	16	57
May	48	50	54	44	29	33
Jun	64	37	54	53	20	56
Jul	70	49	48	67	30	59
Aug	72	39	49	62	25	68
Sep	63	41	39	54	29	67
Oct	70	30	41	54	22	90
Nov	72	58	38	39	39	60
Dec	79	28	27	89	15	67
Total	669	488	549	576	291	737

It is pleasing to see the number of prisoners trained by the Samaritans to be Listeners available to support other prisoners across the prison has increased during the 2023 year (see the table, below). Supportive mechanisms in place such as [listeners](#) provide an invaluable service for prisoners. However, too often, Listeners

are required to speak with prisoners through closed cell doors, due to staffing restrictions. This is contrary to the agreed process in place between prisons and the Samaritans. Listeners who are unable to speak with prisoners in an appropriate private room are restricted in the support they can provide. The Board urges the Prison Service to ensure that Listeners are provided with appropriate facilities to support other prisoners. Through our monitoring, the Board has observed not only the increase in the recruitment of Listeners but also the raised profile of Listeners amongst both prisoners and staff alike. There were no wings without Listeners whenever the Board monitored the work of Listeners.

The Board noted some good practice in terms of a [promotional video](#) created by Mersey Care and HMP Liverpool to promote the Listener scheme. The video is not currently available within the prison for prisoners, which is a missed opportunity.

Area	2023 Trained Listeners	2022 Trained Listeners
A Wing	1	1
B Wing	9	3
F Wing	1	0
G Wing	2	0
H Wing	4	1
I Wing	6	NA
J Wing	4	1
K Wing	2	3
Total	29	9

The Board would like to see additional staffing resources allocated to safer custody, given the challenges both prisoners and the prison is experiencing (see section 4.3, below, 'Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation', for more context). Additional resources were provided for a limited amount of time when the cluster death status was announced. However, this did not continue for a substantial period to make a meaningful difference in terms of safety for prisoners. Safer custody staff are stretched, often redeployed due to staffing shortages and completing tasks in relation to non-safety matters such as immigration processes, which distracts them from their primary duties. The Board must stress that it has observed positive interactions from safer custody staff, with a shared purpose to improve outcomes for prisoners. Empathy shown towards, and on behalf of, prisoners by the safer custody team is often impressive and mindful of the mental health difficulties faced by a growing number of prisoners.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The Board is concerned about an increase in prisoner-on-staff assaults, which is the highest it has been in three years, whereby it has gone from 31 to 51 incidents. COVID restrictions almost certainly accounted for some of the previous year's decreases in violence. Whilst the Board praised the prison in its last annual report for the improvement in this area, this has, unfortunately, not been sustained. Prisoner-

on-prisoner violence has also increased during the reporting year, from 90 to 129 incidents.

The Board has observed that challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs), used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence, have not always been reviewed in accordance with the permitted timeframes.

Incidents recorded of assaults or violence						
Month	2023 Prisoner on staff assault	2022 Prisoner on staff assault	2021 Prisoner on staff assault	2023 Prisoner on prisoner violence	2022 Prisoner on prisoner violence	2021 Prisoner on prisoner violence
Jan	7	3	3	11	8	3
Feb	2	2	4	7	3	7
Mar	3	1	0	11	8	15
Apr	3	2	4	10	2	9
May	1	5	7	9	9	5
Jun	5	0	10	11	5	8
Jul	3	6	4	12	11	13
Aug	7	1	5	11	7	5
Sep	8	0	2	11	7	6
Oct	3	3	0	12	10	12
Nov	5	3	2	9	9	3
Dec	4	5	2	15	11	5
Total	51	31	43	129	90	91

Prisoners self-isolating has significantly increased, from 29 prisoners to 86 prisoners. The root cause of self-isolation is often safety related, with prisoners fearing for their safety due to the threat of violence, gang issues, bullying or debt. The Board has occasionally observed delays with violence reduction officers visiting prisoners to obtain information and listen to prisoner concerns. On occasions, this has resulted in prisoners committing an act to be placed in the segregation unit CSU, as they feel they have no choice and will be safer there. Prisoners have raised this issue directly with the Board and the Board has also observed this within adjudications (disciplinary hearings held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules). The increase in prisoners self-isolating is of concern to the Board.

Bullying incidents, according to data from HMP Liverpool, have fallen from 50 incidents to four incidents in one year. This is a pleasing development, which the Board hopes will be maintained in the coming year and beyond.

Month	2023 Bullying incidents	2022 Bullying incidents
Jan	0	2
Feb	0	2
Mar	0	1
Apr	0	1
May	1	2
Jun	0	1
Jul	0	4
Aug	1	7
Sep	1	10
Oct	1	5
Nov	0	9
Dec	0	6
Total	4	50

HMP Liverpool held a safety summit in November, whereby the prison sought the views of staff and prisoners on what would make the prison safer. Both staff and prisoners shared the view that fewer regime lockdowns and improved communication would significantly improve the morale and mental health of prisoners, thus improving safety. The Board is of the same view.

4.4 Use of force (UoF)

The Board has encountered some difficulties in terms of being able to monitor reported use of force (UoF) incidents throughout the reporting year. Too often, weekly review meetings were cancelled (37% of weekly meetings), usually without the Board being notified in advance. This meant that, on numerous occasions, Board members had taken time off work, rearranged prior commitments and travelled to the prison only to find that the meeting was cancelled. The Board raised this concern in its previous annual report.

In line with national guidelines, UoF incidents are filtered before being sent for review at UoF meetings, where concerns are identified by the UoF co-ordinator and Deputy Governor. UoF incidents not brought to the UoF meeting but investigated separately are more difficult for the Board to monitor. The Board would like to see an agreed process where we are able to routinely see information on such cases that do not get reviewed at weekly UoF meetings.

The Board is not routinely notified in advance of planned UoF incidents, which prevents us from monitoring and observing the treatment of prisoners in these incidents. In line with such notification being a requirement in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (section 16. e), the Board would urge the prison governance to ensure, wherever possible, that the Board is notified in advance of planned UoF incidents.

HMP Liverpool underwent some changes in terms of UoF responsibilities towards the end of the reporting period. The Board has noted an improvement in terms of

governance through oversight, information sharing and transparency around UoF incidents. The Board intends to closely monitor this over the next reporting period so they can be confident that this area of monitoring is producing positive outcomes for prisoners.

There was an increase in UoF incidents, from 270 incidents in 2022 to 334 in 2023. A total of 31% of UoF incidents did not have a completed F213. This is a form completed by healthcare within 24 hours of UoF being used, which captures any injuries a prisoner may have received from a UoF incident. Only 79 out of 334 UoF incidents were reviewed at UoF meetings, meaning 76% of incidents were not reviewed to help ensure fair and humane treatment of prisoners.

The Board is pleased to note that 78% of UoF incidents were captured on body worn video cameras, which was a previous concern raised by the Board. The Board has observed the prison taking pro-active steps to increase the uptake and activation of body worn video cameras, with positive results. We would like to see these efforts continue even further, to increase transparency and learning.

UoF incidents and management				
Month	2023 UoF Incidents	2023 UoF Incidents with a Completed F213	2023 UoF Incidents Reviewed at UoF Meetings	2023 UoF Recorded On BWVC
Jan	25	13	4	24
Feb	23	11	7	19
Mar	14	0	11	13
Apr	24	1	6	22
May	17	17	9	15
Jun	46	46	3	34
Jul	23	23	6	20
Aug	34	34	8	29
Sep	27	23	9	19
Oct	37	13	0	12
Nov	36	35	7	29
Dec	28	16	9	26
Total	334	232	79	262

From the ethnicity and religion data that has been made available, the Board has identified several concerns. Whilst there has been a 24% increase in UoF incidents, it appears that certain ethnicities account for a disproportionate increase in UoF incidents. For example, while prisoners identifying as of white ethnicity saw an 18% increase in UoF incidents, prisoners with a mixed ethnicity saw a 64% increase. It must be noted that this must be looked at in context, as one prisoner from a particular ethnic background with multiple UoF incidents can distort figures. The Board would like to see regular UoF meetings, which consider the recommendations listed within the [Lammy Review](#), in particular 'Recommendation 25'. This was raised nationally in 2017 to ensure active monitoring of UoF incidents that tackle any disproportionate negative outcomes.

UoF incidents by ethnicity				
Ethnicity	2023 Figures	2022 Figures	Percentage Change	Percentage Change
Asian/Asian British: Indian	5	2	+150%	+186%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	9	2	+350%	
Asian/Asian British: Any other background	6	3	+100%	
Black/Black British: Caribbean	11	19	-42%	+6%
Black/Black British: African	12	10	+20%	
Black/Black British: Any other Background	10	2	+400%	
Mixed: White and Asian	1	3	-67%	+64%
Mixed: Any other background	3	1	+200%	
Mixed: White and Black African	7	0	+700%	
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	12	10	+20%	
Other: Any other background	2	2	0%	0%
White: Any other background	3	1	+200%	+18%
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Irish/British	252	215	+17%	
Unknown	1	0	+100%	+100%
Total	334	270	+24%	+24%
Note % changes where whole numbers are small may appear excessive				

The Board has observed a disproportionate increase in UoF incidents in some areas of the prison, such as J wing and reception. However, actual figures remain low in these areas. Some wings have seen a decrease in UoF incidents, despite overall increases in incidents within the prison. I and K wings, alongside F and A wing, saw decreases. The Board is not aware of what lessons have been learnt from these wings that can be shared across other wings to help decrease overall UoF incidents.

Uof by location of incident			
Location	2023 UoF (by area)	2022 UoF (by area)	Percentage Change
A Wing	14	15	-7%
B Wing	46	45	+2%
CSU	33	28	+18%
F Wing	40	44	-9%
G Wing	72	61	+18%
H Wing	76	39	+95%
I and K Wing	19	26	-27%
J Wing	5	0	+500%
Healthcare	13	7	+86%
V/P Centre	0	0	0%
Centre	0	0	0%
Visits	4	2	+100%
Surgery Hatch	0	0	0%
Reception	5	1	+400%

Education	2	0	+200%
Workshops	2	2	0%
External Escort	3	0	+300%
Total	334	270	+24%
Note % changes where whole numbers are small may appear excessive			

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Regrettably, illicit items at HMP Liverpool remain easily available. In addition to this, action is not always taken to detect, prevent and remove illicit items swiftly. The mandatory drug testing (MDT) unit is often closed due to staff shortages, despite safety, security and drug strategy being three of the six priorities self-identified at HMP Liverpool. The Board is extremely concerned that when a positive MDT is confirmed, action is not always taken, due to staff resource and oversight. Out of 220 positive results, no action was taken on 65 positive results. In some months, such as April 2023, action was only taken on one of 17 positive results. The lack of action does not act as an effective deterrent or keep prisoners and staff safe. In addition, HMP Liverpool is only required to complete 45 MDTs each month, meaning that less than 5% of prisoners are tested for illicit drug use. The Board does not feel such a low testing rate is appropriate, given the growing issue of illicit items, including illegal drugs, at the prison.

There has been a pleasing reduction in drone sightings, from 191 to 117, although the figure remains high. This has been reported as a result of several successful prosecutions. New legislation on '[no-fly zones](#)' has been introduced in England and Wales, which includes all prisons. This legislation should act as a further deterrent and reduce illicit items being dropped by drones.

Activity relating to drugs and contraband						
Month	2023 Drone Sightings	2022 Drone Sightings	MDT's Conducted	MDT Positive Results	MDT Positive Results Where No Action Could be Taken	MDT Negative Results
Jan	4	33	52	12	5	40
Feb	0	29	42	13	1	29
Mar	4	30	41	11	5	30
Apr	8	20	45	17	16	28
May	17	19	38	15	6	23
Jun	16	8	57	23	9	34
Jul	19	15	87	43	7	44
Aug	12	6	46	14	10	32
Sep	12	7	49	12	1	37
Oct	13	12	50	14	1	36
Nov	6	4	56	28	4	28
Dec	6	8	43	18	0	25
Total	117	191	606	220	65	386

When the prison receives credible intelligence that illicit items may be in a prisoner's cell, action has not always been taken promptly and robustly. The time taken for cell searches to be conducted is often too long, in the Board's view. The delay, from intelligence received and action, means that prisoners may have used, disposed of or sold the illicit items and/or been tipped off prior to the cell search being completed. For example, out of 12 months, six of these months, some cell searches were not completed for 10 or more days. Prisoners being in possession of potential illicit items represents a safety and security risk to themselves, other prisoners and staff. Prompt and robust action is needed to keep prisoners and staff safe from illicit items, through a detect, prevent and remove approach to illicit items, thus improving prisoner outcomes. Of 300 cell searches, 115 revealed illicit items, representing a 38% positive find rate (see the table, below). Some of the illicit items found at HMP Liverpool include:

- 132 mobile phones
- 17 USBs
- seven SIM cards
- 32 weapons
- 4,319 grams of cannabis
- 74 grams of Spice
- four bottles of steroids
- 2,559 grams of tobacco
- 19 litres of fermenting liquid

Month	2023 Number of Cell Searches	Average amount of days for Cell Searches to be conducted	Longest amount of days for a cell search to be Conducted	2022 Number of Cell Searches	2023 Positive Cell Finds	2022 Positive Cell Finds
Jan	7	3.5	10	NA	5	NA
Feb	13	3	7	NA	6	NA
Mar	27	2.5	9	NA	9	NA
Apr	33	4	12	NA	12	NA
May	33	1.5	4	NA	13	NA
Jun	10	3	7	NA	4	NA
Jul	28	7.5	20	NA	4	NA
Aug	30	5.5	10	NA	9	NA
Sep	25	5	7	NA	10	NA
Oct	29	6	10	NA	11	NA
Nov	32	3	11	NA	15	NA
Dec	33	5	9	NA	17	NA
Total	300	4 days	10 days	243	115	117

The Board previously raised concerns about security processes at the main gate in the [last annual report](#). It has been pleasing to see improvements have been made, including X-ray scanners being installed in July 2023 so that staff and visitors' bags could go through the scanned. The Board was reassured when the newly appointed Governor took swift action on our concerns, which he echoed. The prison introduced an enhanced gate security (EGS) procedure in October. The Board has observed improvements since its introduction.

During the latter part of the reporting year, a more consistent approach to security was observed. The Board will be monitoring the security at the main gate closely during the next calendar year to observe the continued impact of the EGS procedure in its effectiveness as an avenue to restrict illicit items entering the prison establishment.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

HMP Liverpool is an old, Victorian prison and, as such, has several challenges around accommodation and facilities, which are known and acknowledged. An ongoing programme of refurbishment is in place to increase the standards of residential wings, individual cells and communal facilities such as the showers.

The Board raised significant concerns during the reporting year, when prisoners were moved from K wing to I wing (newly refurbished). There were a small number of prisoners with mobility and accessibility needs on K wing, including wheelchair users. However, the prison did not factor this in to their planned refurbishment, meaning that some prisoners had no appropriate cell to meet their needs. Furthermore, the refurbished I wing had no ramps in place, impacting prisoners with mobility and accessibility needs. Understandably, this led to a period of destabilisation and worries amongst a small number of prisoners who felt their needs were excluded. The Board does not view it humane that prisoners with disabilities were placed in inappropriate cells or relocated to the healthcare unit due to lack of organisation and planning from the prison.

There is a significant lack of accessible cells within the prison to meet current needs and the Board does not feel that enough attention is given to this area: availability of accessible cells is not keeping up with an increased demand. Understandably, a Victorian prison will have limitations, but further consideration on meeting the needs of prisoners with accessibility needs must be considered locally and by the wider Prison Service.

The Board has observed improvements in outside areas for prisoners, with benches now available in most exercise yards. In addition, the prison has had a more pro-active cleaning and painting programme in place, with new signage resulting in a more welcoming environment. There are plans to introduce a programme of gardening and groundworks using prisoners and staff to enhance the external grounds. The Board is pleased with this initiative which will, hopefully, help improve the mental health and sense of achievement for prisoners involved and the wider prison population.

The Board received far fewer applications from prisoners in relation to food during the reporting year. We have observed a pro-active catering team, which deals with prisoner complaints promptly and is open to learning lessons to improve outcomes for prisoners. On the rare occasion that the Board receives an application regarding a food matter it is usually in relation to a special diet, the catering team responds promptly and effectively to assist the prisoner.

It must be noted that the prison, like the rest of the nation, has encountered challenges around the increase in food prices during the reporting year without any additional increase in the food budget. Despite this challenge, the catering team has ensured a good food offering to prisoners, including those on special diets.

5.2 Segregation

The Board has observed positive interactions between staff and prisoners located in the CSU. Staff at CSU work with prisoners who often have complex needs, including

challenging behaviour and mental health issues. Empathy shown by the vast majority of staff to such prisoners is a pleasing aspect of the CSU's daily regime.

The Board has raised the inhumane length of time that prisoners are kept in the CSU, awaiting transfer to an appropriate mental health establishment, in previous annual reports. Unfortunately, this reporting year was no different. The Board raised concerns about a prisoner (whom we shall call Prisoner A) who was in the CSU for a total of 377 days. We do not view this as humane or conducive to achieving positive outcomes for the prisoner. Whilst the Board observed the prison escalating matters and raising concerns themselves to senior national officials, the lack of available space in mental health establishments and the lack of legal timeframes for transfer prisoners needing this specialist support has resulted in negative outcomes for prisoners yet again. Please note that it is recognised by the IMB that during his extensive time in the CSU, Prisoner A was offered regular moves to the healthcare unit, which he did on one occasion agree to and was successful for a short period of time. Due to his behaviour being too complex to be managed in a normal location, staff provided regular offerings of in-cell activities and daily interactions, which supported management of his complex needs while in the CSU.

Unfortunately, alongside Prisoner A, there were other prisoners who experienced the same at HMP Liverpool, albeit for fewer days in total. The Board urges the relevant Minister to review the current processes, legal framework on timeframes for transfers to mental health establishments and take prompt action on the matter. It is with regret that the Ministerial responses we have previously received have not resolved or made any difference to achieve more positive outcomes for prisoners.

The Board observed a chaotic and disorganised referral process, with different mental health professionals from an array of establishments conducting assessments and not accepting previous professional assessments. On one occasion, they did not accept professional assessments from their own establishment. The current referral pathways and process observed appeared convoluted and do not appear fit for purpose.

Prisoners within the CSU frequently raise concerns that their property has not come with them from their cell on their wing. Too often, prisoners' property gets 'lost' and does not arrive at the CSU due to the prison not following agreed processes, particularly around activating body worn video cameras when completing cell clearances. Staff advise the Board and prisoners that this is due to staffing shortages. This results in resentment from prisoners and frustration at a time when they are often experiencing difficulties themselves. In addition, prisoners then submit complaints, which add to the workload of staff, meaning that failure of staff to follow the correct process does not save time overall. The Board does not view it fair that prisoners' property does not arrive with them promptly in the CSU and that property items go missing during the process.

The prison does not routinely notify the Board of Rule 45 meetings (these review and authorise continuing segregation and temporary confinement), which prevents the Board from monitoring this area. Repeated requests to communicate R45 meetings in advance to the Board has not resulted in effective action. The Board would ask the prison to ensure that they are informed of R45 meetings and that our attendance is accommodated, where possible, as part of our independent monitoring.

The Board is pleased to note that all prisoners in CSU now receive a daily regime. Previously, some prisoners who were on several officer unlock (usually due to ill mental health) only had a regime every other day. This meant that there were days when prisoners were in their cells for 24 hours, with no access to fresh air, a shower or a phone to contact friends and family. The Board is keen for the prison to explore what further steps they can take to ensure that the CSU is an environment that does not negatively impact on prisoners' mental health during their stay.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The prison responded in a positive manner to the return to normality following the lifting of COVID-pandemic conditions. However, the daily life of the prison has been impacted greatly by a high degree of staff absence, which has inevitably had a negative effect on relationships among management, staff and prisoners at all levels. Continued high staff absences during 2023 resulted in the daily regimes at wing level being restricted, to enable staff to manage the prison safely. These constant restrictions led to prisoner concerns, staff frustrations and tiredness, and some of the regular opportunities for informal engagement between staff and prisoners was often lost. In the same way, the education service provided was also restricted, due to staff absence and unfilled vacancies. Despite these mitigating factors, the overall relationships between management, staff and prisoners have been observed to be good: Board members have often witnessed the supportive and sympathetic handling of prisoners by staff, with positive outcomes ensuing.

Regime restrictions and staff redeployment, due to higher staff absences, had impacted the key worker scheme during the post-COVID period. The Board is pleased to note that the prison has worked hard on recruiting and deploying key workers across the prison. Whereas, previously, the shortage of key workers meant that prisoners were never guaranteed the same key worker if they moved wings, key workers are now assigned to wings rather than across the prison, resulting in a more effective and consistent approach to deploying key workers. Prisoners have commented on the improved arrangements and the IMB recognises that the prison has done its best to address these issues. The key worker arrangements in place now offer promise for the continued effective development of this vital role within the prison.

Good communication in prisons helps to ease tensions and anxieties and informs prisoners and their families about any issues. The prisoners have in-cell phones, which enable them to maintain contact with their families. However, there remain issues about delays in getting approval for phone numbers to be added to a prisoner's approved list. Information continued to be regularly made available on information kiosks (self-service computers on the wings, which allow prisoners to manage their daily affairs), through notices to prisoners, prison radio and by regular briefings with prisoner representatives. Occasionally, the kiosks on some wings or floors are in need of repair or software updates and it often takes too long for repairs to be carried out, which increases the frustration of prisoners and staff alike. In the Board's view, the prison communicates effectively and appropriately with families on the vast majority of occasions.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Due to the equality lead only taking up her appointment shortly before the reporting year, an action log was in place instead of an action plan, and progress on actions were monitored through equality team meetings. The work of the team is also usually supported by equality prisoner representatives from each of the residential units.

The prison monitors the protected characteristics, as set out under the Equality Act, and records any complaints using discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs). These may be completed by prisoners, staff or visitors. Dedicated DIRF post boxes are located on all prison wings. The number of DIRFs received in the reporting year are shown below:

Protected Characteristic	Reports of Discrimination		
	Number of DIRFs received		
	2021	202	2023
Race	17	23	18
Religion/beliefs	5	8	6
Disability	1	2	13
Gender	0	1	0
Sexual orientation	1	2	7
Rece/religion	-	-	3
Race/sexual orientation	-	-	1
Total	24	36	48

Although it would appear that the number of DIRFs has increased during the last year, the equality lead has indicated that they believe it is a reflection of a more consistent approach to reports being collated by the team.

Prior to the equality lead taking up her post, some DIRFs did not reach the department to be answered. The equality team now has a more robust process in place for DIRFs. The prison population seems to have more faith in the system and appears more confident that appropriate action will be taken once the forms are submitted.

The number of disability-related DIRFs has increased. In the Board's view, this is almost certainly due to a number of factors, including:

- Not enough disability cells to house wheelchair users, who are therefore struggling to get in and out of the cell. This has been exacerbated by the closure of a suitable wing and the transfer of a small number of wheelchair users to unsuitable accommodation. Indeed, one prisoner has had to be accommodated, long term, in the healthcare unit purely due to a lack of suitable access elsewhere.
- Disabled prisoners do not have immediate access to exercise yards for fresh air, due to lack of ramps on most wings.

Although it would appear that the number of DIRFs related to sexual orientation has increased, the equality lead has indicated that the rise in numbers is due to one person submitting four DIRFs throughout the year and the use of homophobic slurs. Again, there is also the view that numbers have increased due to prisoners having

more faith and trust in the system and their belief that appropriate action will be taken once a DIRF is submitted.

The DIRFs, notices and other publications are translated and displayed in numerous languages, although the foreign national prisoner population at Liverpool remains relatively low. The equality team has issued staff guidance in the past on the use of The Big Word translation service for foreign national prisoners with limited understanding of spoken or written English language. Handsets and instructions for use are sited in all residential and communal areas around the prison. Unfortunately, it is under-used and staff/prisoner awareness needs to be raised regarding this service. The information regarding men who require translation is passed to residential teams and, where possible, they are located with other members of their native country who do speak English.

The prison held prisoner equality representative meetings, when possible, where issues of concern could be raised on behalf of prisoners. However, meetings were impacted at times by the need to redeploy staff to other duties to cover absences.

Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs), for disabled prisoners who require support in the event of an evacuation, are in place and those with a plan are clearly identified on each wing.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy continues to provide excellent multi-faith and non-faith support across the prison and supports all major faiths and beliefs. The prison, through the work of the chaplaincy, maintains a calendar of special religious days and care is taken that appropriate food is provided by the kitchens during these periods. The Board have been impressed with the visibility of the chaplaincy team around the prison, and prisoners comment positively about the support they receive, regardless of their own particular beliefs or background. The chaplaincy is well led, provides a vital service to prisoners and their families and offers high-quality comfort and support at times of bereavement, anguish and illness. Staff can also be supported by the chaplaincy team. This was particularly evident when the regime sadly encountered a cluster of deaths in custody over a short period of time during the summer months. The support and help given to prisoners and staff was extensive and the IMB commends the chaplaincy for the way they carry out their role on a daily basis.

5.6 Complaints

The Board has monitored outstanding complaints (COMPs) during the reporting year. Both prisoners and staff have raised the issue of other establishments not responding to prisoners' complaints, which causes frustration. The Board receives applications about this issue frequently. When prisoners don't get responses to complaints, their issues do not get resolved, they cannot receive compensation for lost property and the Board then receives applications about the same issue, which creates additional work for the IMB and the prison staff. The Board must stress that this is not the fault of HMP Liverpool. We have observed a pro-active business hub, which repeatedly contacts other establishments for a response, to no avail. The Board does not view it fair that prisoners wait so long for a response to complaints, contrary to the prison's own policy on this matter. We have also raised this matter with other IMB in the northwest for their awareness.

In terms of complaints from prisoners within HMP Liverpool to the prison the Board is pleased to see that there are generally no outstanding complaints. However, our monitoring has, on some occasions, shown some prisoners were waiting for a response which was not identified through the prisons own tracking system. These mainly concerned complaints to healthcare which are tracked by the healthcare provider themselves. The Board feels it would be useful for the prison to introduce arrangements where they were able to monitor themselves how promptly the healthcare providers respond to complaints.

5.7 Property

Property getting lost or going missing during transfers is still an ongoing issue for prisoners, despite a significant reduction in reporting. Previous concerns from the Board to the Prison Service has had little impact on the outcomes for prisoners, in terms of property during transfer from another establishment. Prisoners, through no fault of their own, are required to submit numerous applications and complaints to retrieve their property and all too often, their property cannot be located. The undue anxiety for prisoners is further exacerbated through establishments not responding to complaints, in line with the agreed timeframes. Whilst there has been a 51% reduction in complaints relating to property during transfers, many prisoners wait for extensive periods before receiving a response (see section 5.6, 'Complaints', above). The process does not always produce positive outcomes for prisoners and prisoners' experience is not fair.

Month	2023 COMPS <i>(Property during transfer)</i>	2022 COMPS <i>(Property during transfer)</i>
Jan	15	25
Feb	6	17
Mar	20	58
Apr	16	27
May	17	49
Jun	13	40
Jul	8	41
Aug	18	35
Sep	23	41
Oct	24	26
Nov	17	31
Dec	22	15
Total	199	405

The Board feels a more pro-active approach in terms of prisoners' property at reception is needed to resolve matters more quickly. Whilst the Board recognises that this is not the fault of HMP Liverpool, it still presents an issue for prisoners both locally and at a national level. We urge the Prison Service to have a zero-tolerance approach to lost property during transfers. We would also recommend that the Prison Service reviews processes regarding prison staff chasing prisoner property at reception, rather than prisoners needing to go through exhaustive complaints' processes, which are often not responded to properly or ignored.

Despite raising this in three of our previous annual reports and receiving Ministerial Responses in [2022](#), [2021](#) and [2020](#) on the matter, the Board does not feel the responses received have made any material difference to prisoners or their property during transfers.

As discussed in section 5.2 ('Segregation'), property for prisoners who are transferred to the CSU is a frequent issue, which is a concern for both prisoners and the Board.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The reporting period has been a year of progress for healthcare, with all clinics up and running, post-COVID. The healthcare department has a reduced capacity within the waiting areas of the outpatient department and there are plans to improve this and be more reflective of external provision. With improved seating and literature, the healthcare environment is more welcoming and user friendly.

The number of patients who do not attend appointments continues to be high, due to a variety of reasons, including staff shortages and absences (for moving prisoners from their wing to healthcare at a given appointment time). Changes to processes have been made to make sure patients do not slip through the net, including:

- Patients who do not attend for an appointment are triaged by the clinician who they were originally supposed to see to prevent them being re-listed.
- A discussion of issues or a consultation can take place via the in-cell phone.

A member of the healthcare team attends the Prisoner Consultative Committee (PCC) meetings and family forum sessions (families who are attending visits sessions are given the opportunity to meet with a range of prison agencies) and engages with patients and their families in these forums to work collaboratively to improving services. The healthcare department seems committed to further develop and co-produce services with patients.

The healthcare team and the safer custody team have worked collaboratively, looking at good practice, and lessons have been learned following the recent spate of apparent self-inflicted deaths that have sadly occurred at the prison.

Primary healthcare has recently reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the work of the IMB to fulfil their role in being the healthcare support for prisoners. Over the latter part of 2023, more positive working relationships began to emerge between healthcare and other prison agencies, including the IMB.

The Board regularly visits the healthcare unit, whether as part of a monitoring visit, looking at a particular issue or responding to applications from prisoners. Whenever the Board visits healthcare, it always speaks with healthcare or prison staff before communicating with patients, particularly those who suffer from poor mental health.

Some prisoners who are housed in the CSU have had serious mental health issues but cannot be accommodated in the in-patient facility due to the risks they pose. This is an ongoing concern for the Board, which feels that the small number of prisoners who fall into this category should not be at HMP Liverpool but accommodated across the prison estate nationally in more suitable conditions or mental health facilities.

Prisoners are able to complain to the healthcare department using the kiosk system, although evidence shows that these are not always received by healthcare (prison staff have witnessed these submissions on some occasions and they have not been received). It is worth noting that the healthcare department follows a different complaints' procedure, which causes some confusion for prisoners and staff.

The Board received 36 applications about healthcare in 2023, which shows a 32% reduction on the number received (53) in the previous year. Most applications complained about not receiving the correct or timely medication.

The Board has recently found healthcare staff helpful and open in resolving issues. Healthcare management and the Board have developed a transparent relationship. To improve patient safety, the healthcare department continually reviews procedures to minimise risks and problems associated with individuals and all prisoners.

Following previous concerns expressed by the Care and Quality Commission (CQC) about the safety of the dispensing of medicines, healthcare managers implemented a robust action plan and reviewed their whole approach to this aspect of their daily work routine. During the reporting year, the healthcare department received a further inspection visit from CQC, which reported that good improvements had indeed been made. The report of June 2023 stated that:

- Staff managed medicines safely.
- Managers had improved quality assurance processes to ensure changes in service delivery are embedded and effective.

6.2 Physical healthcare

All prisoners are seen by the healthcare department as part of their initial assessment. The kiosk system and the daily presence of healthcare staff on the wings enables prisoners to book appointments and be seen by staff within a reasonable amount of time. The Board has found that staff generally respond quickly to concerns raised and often undertake to see the prisoner on the same day or within 24 hours.

The healthcare department reported that very few clinics have been curtailed during the reporting period and the Board received only a small number of negative comments from prisoners regarding difficulties accessing appointments.

Monthly figures for appointments offered within healthcare, patients seen, refusals to be seen and non-attendance show an improved picture compared with the previous reporting year. However, the healthcare department remains concerned about the number of non-attendees, for whatever reason. Data provided by healthcare would indicate that, in a typical month, in excess of 1,000 clinic appointments are offered, with around 70% of patients being seen, roughly 18% refusing to attend, and 12% not showing up for their scheduled appointment. Healthcare staff have stated that the issue of non-attendance is often one of enablement, with prisoners telling them that wing officers did not facilitate the scheduled appointment. Prisoners have reported to IMB that officers have told them that no one was available to take them to their appointment, due to staff shortages or a wing lockdown. Staff have told the IMB that prisoners often choose not to attend (DNAs) when given the opportunity.

The issue of DNAs continues to be a concern for the healthcare department, which is in constant discussions with prison staff about how to improve the rates of attendance. IMB shares this concern, despite recent improvements being made.

6.3 Mental health

Mersey Care is contracted to provide mental health services, working with Spectrum Community Health. IMB continues to see clear evidence, through data, records of meetings and conversation with staff, that they work closely together.

Prisoners are initially screened by Spectrum at reception. Mersey Care sees every prisoner within 72 hours of their arrival. Whilst numbers fluctuate, there are typically between 50 and 70 prisoners who would be categorised with a serious mental illness (SMI): each would be on a support pathway, according to their needs, with around half having a named nurse.

There are, typically, another 243 prisoners case loaded by the integrated mental health team. They are known as having some type of mental health need and would be accessing therapy through one of the clinics, such as for those for elderly, a learning disability, psychological support, occupational therapy, speech and language support or the neurodiverse groups.

The IMB rarely receives applications from prisoners in mental health crisis who are not already known to the healthcare department. The Board has been reassured by the prompt response prisoners receive when it reaches out on their behalf. The mental health team report that they typically receive 70-80 crisis calls each week, which they try to respond to promptly.

The IMB has spoken to the healthcare department and the prison to express concern about prisoners with a serious mental health issue who are detained in the CSU. These men have been assessed as posing risks that cannot be managed in the prison healthcare facility. Healthcare staff and officers have been supportive of moving these prisoners to a designated mental health unit as they become available. As stated previously, this is now a major concern at HMP Liverpool and across the prison estate, as a whole.

6.4 Social care

The Board rarely receives applications concerning social care needs and very few concerns have been brought to our attention. Prisoners use peer supporters, and those with mobility issues are generally housed at ground level, although this problem has been exacerbated during the reporting year due to wing refurbishments and the unsuitability of temporary wing accommodation. Moving between wings as part of the refurbishment programme was a problem for older prisoners with mobility issues and wheelchair users. The prison did not appear to have planned for such prisoners prior to the temporary moves being actioned.

6.5 Exercise, regime

The amount of time spent out of cell and in exercise varied according to individual choice and regime restrictions reducing the offer. HMP Liverpool was generally able to maintain access to the exercise yard for all prisoners on a daily basis. However, the Board found that, access to exercise facilities and fresh air was often hampered, due to staff shortages or a wing decision that the weather was too inclement. The Board feels this should not be a reason for outdoor exercise to be curtailed unless the weather conditions are dangerous or extreme. We received very few applications concerning access to exercise or activities, but we often received 'collective

unhappiness' complaints about the disrupted arrangements from groups of prisoners when visiting the wings.

Prisoners have stated that access to the gym and sports facilities has improved but is often affected by wing closures or staff shortages. However, on a positive note, the Board have received very few applications about access to the gym and sports facilities.

The prison has reintroduced 'park runs' throughout the year and has hosted visits from external professional football teams to take part in prisoner-related activities, including a football match. In addition, there have been football competitions amongst staff and prisoners to raise money for local charities.

The Board noted an increasing use of the gym and the all-weather sports facility as the 2023 calendar year progressed.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The MDT programme has been affected by staffing issues across the prison and this has continued to impact on the scope of testing done throughout the reporting year. The Board continues to express concern about the low number of random tests taking place. The prison's governance is trying their best to raise the effectiveness of the MDT programme and recognises that drugs and access to illicit drugs is a growing problem for the prison.

The Board has seen prisoners under the influence of drugs and, often, the presence of drugs can be smelt when certain wings are entered. Towards the end of the year, the number of visits from the sniffer dogs' team was increased. It seems apparent that prison governance is determined to step up its daily and weekly approach to reducing the access and availability of illicit drugs across the prison estate.

Staffing MDT services to full capacity seems to be an ongoing issue which, no doubt, will continue into the year(s) ahead. Whilst the Board understands the staffing situation locally and nationally, we remain concerned that HMP Liverpool's development to an effective category C prison may be hampered if sufficient resources are not available to support prisoners who need to change their misuse of drug habits. The IMB considers that the problem of illicit drugs across the prison is getting worse, which is a worrying trend that needs a swift and consistent approach to improve the situation.

6.7 Soft skills

Neurodiversity support

Shortly before the start of the reporting year, the prison appointed a neurodiversity support manager (NSM). Since then, an audit to look at how many prisoners were identifiable as neurodiverse has taken place and there has been a successful drive to support prisoners in how they communicate and access the rehabilitation opportunities at HMP Liverpool.

Prison documentation used by prisoners has been reviewed to improve accessibility and each wing has a neurodiversity toolkit to help staff support prisoners who have needs.

The NSM is working successfully with education, healthcare, the library service and POPs to identify all prisoners (and families) with neurodiverse needs during initial assessment. The Board has been pleased with the work undertaken to date and will continue to monitor the work of the neurodiversity team.

Drug misuse support

Change, Grow, Live (CGL) is a voluntary organisation that helps prisoners and their families cope with their substance misuse issues. At HMP Liverpool, CGL has a team of recovery co-ordinators, a programmes team and a connecting communities team. Prisoners and their families who engage with the service can access one-to-one support, which looks at their drug or alcohol misuse, the impacts that it has had on their lives and ways to avoid this in the future.

The programmes team offers a number of group works, ranging from one-day sessions to more intense programmes. It also offers a range of mutual aid groups, including NA (Narcotics Anonymous), AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) CA (Cocaine Anonymous), SMART and Inside Out.

The connecting communities team works with prisoners who are due for release within 3-4 months, preparing them for release and a more stable lifestyle. They will also help with access to residential rehabilitation and supported recovery homes.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education

This is the first full year of the prison operating a 'normal regime' since COVID restrictions. This has led to the opportunity to review and develop a wider curriculum package throughout the prison and to re-establish good practices. The lack of sufficient activity places was a 'priority concern' in the 2022 report of HM Inspector of Prisons (HMIP).

A new head of education, skills and work was appointed by the Prison Service in September 2023. Their role is to develop educational practices throughout the establishment to ensure that all prisoners are given the opportunity to develop and enrich their knowledge, skills and understanding. This is to help them to be better placed to obtain stable employment on release and reduce reoffending.

Unfortunately, there has been an inconsistent regime throughout the reporting year, due to fluctuating staffing levels within the prison, both education provider (Novus) and prison staff alike. This has led to a number of operational closures for prolonged periods of time, which has impacted the provider's ability to complete courses within the set timeframe and for learners to adequately complete qualifications. However, experiences from the COVID pandemic have enabled Novus to mitigate against regime closures by offering on-wing packs and learning, with a number of prisoners still completing qualifications under these challenging circumstances.

Previous concerns over the level of non-accredited courses have been addressed. At the end of the contract year (February 2023), any remaining non-accredited courses were phased out and now mainly accredited courses are on offer in most areas.

Functional skills has been a priority in education at the prison and Novus now offers a wider and more extensive range of teaching and learning opportunities. New staff have been recruited and trained in functional and digital skills. Novus and prison managers are confident that, over time, the work being done will lead to positive outcomes for the prison learners.

The curriculum offer (as outlined in the table below) and the quality of teaching staff is continually monitored by senior leaders, so they are reassured that the curriculum needs of the prisoners are met. Novus works increasingly closely with the learning and skills manager, and the newly appointed head of education, skills and work, who quality assures and supports their work for HMP Liverpool.

Due to previous unsatisfactory staffing levels from Novus and high levels of sickness, the management of sickness was reviewed and a robust system put in place. The policy regarding absence and staffing was applied consistently and a vast improvement in these areas has been seen as the year progressed.

The prison now operates a full face-to-face education offer. Where necessary, distance and outreach learning are being offered to prisoners to ensure access to the curriculum for all.

A total of 1038 (906 in 2022) enrolments on courses took place during the reporting year, with 672 (556 in 2022) unique learners (the number of learners in total but who may have enrolled in more than one class). The move to accredited courses has had

a positive effect on these numbers, with the higher number of prison transfers and releases meaning that more starts were possible. Of these 1038 enrolments, there was a completion of 771, with a success rate of around 90%, which represents a considerable improvement over previous years. Through the effective use of a screening tool, there is an identified trend, which shows that between 50% and 75% of prisoners are identified with a learning difficulty or disability. This is regularly recorded and shared throughout the year by the NSM, who also delivers training to staff on how to better work with these prisoners.

Due to the increased prison population, a number of measures have been put in place by HMPPS, including increased transfers and the early release of prisoners. This accounts for nearly all of the early withdrawal of prisoners from education courses. In previous years, there were concerns about the number of withdrawals for other reasons. However, with new processes implemented, these have reduced for reasons within control of the prison and education provider.

Although the journey throughout the reporting year has been a 'stop-start' one due to previously mentioned staffing issues (Novus staff and prison staff numbers), the education team has worked hard to improve access to learning. The team has strived to provide an increasing range of enrichment courses and activities throughout the year. Examples of successful workshops and activities include:

- 'Argh Kid': a local poet who visited prison and will deliver workshops in 2024.
- Entry into the Koestler Awards: a creative arts scheme for people in custody.
- Entry into Manchester HOME Open Art competition: with art selected from HMP Liverpool to exhibit.
- A visit from Ashley Nugent during Black History Month to work with prisoners, families and discuss his book.
- The promotion of educational activities and a wide range of enrichment activities continues to be broadcast on the prison's radio and TV station
- Programmes and music curated for events such as Mental Health Awareness Week, Black History Month, religious festivals and for groups such as the Samaritans are continually produced, as well as reading info for in-cell TV.

Programmes are planned throughout the year, according to HMP Liverpool and national and Novus event calendars, with excellent collaboration among all groups. Learners and tutors also produce and distribute reading information, as well as materials for display around the whole establishment on significant events throughout the year. These include: men's health, Holocaust Memorial and important figures.

The induction process through education was reviewed and updated this year so that all prisoners are well informed of the education department and how they can access quality education provision whilst at HMP Liverpool. In addition, a new education prospectus has been produced to ensure that all prisoners have up-to-date information on the available courses and how they can be supported in their education, thus preparing them for rehabilitation and release.

<i>The range of educational provision on offer</i>				
Education Activity/Course	Class size	When allocated	No of wings involved	Length
G3 Art AM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable*
G3 Art PM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 FS Entry English AM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 FS Entry English PM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 FS Maths AM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 FS Maths PM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 Entry Maths	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 FS English AM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 FS English PM	8	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
G3 Radio FT	7	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Mentoring Development - G3	7	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Student Council	10	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Digital Skills - LRC AM	6	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Book Club – LRC	10	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
VP – Art	8	Induction	I Wing	Variable
VP - Digital Skills	10	Induction	I Wing	Variable
VP – English	10	Induction	I Wing	Variable
VP – Maths	10	Induction	I Wing	Variable
VP Student Council	2	Induction	I Wing	Variable
Outreach/Hard to Reach (In-cell)	9	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Total	161 (compared with 101 in 2022)			

**Variable indicates minimum 5 weeks up to maximum of 7 weeks*

The library continues to be accessed by prisoners and is delivered by Liverpool City Council. The employment hub is located within the library and staffed by a range of partnership agencies. The employment hub enables prisoners to obtain information, advice and practical support on CV writing, interview skills, applying for jobs and learning about the labour market.

The library service for prisoners is working well. Wing-based visits take place, Monday to Friday, am and pm. This regular access was occasionally curtailed due to staffing issues. However, library staff worked hard to maintain an effective service as much as possible during the reporting year. Each week, the library service keeps a record of the number of prisoners engaging with and accessing the service and the weekly figures visiting this year has increased impressively. During the 2022 calendar year, there were 2,684 visits to the library, compared with 8,777 in 2023, an increase of 227%.

There have been a number of additional activities taking place within the library setting, including themed displays on relevant topics, such as neurodiversity celebration week and Black History Month, for example. The service also works alongside the prison reading group, which provides books for ‘first-nighters’, which are new books for the prisoners to keep or pass on, and reading group books. The service has also provided books for wing bookcases, which can be accessed at all times, and provided over 800 books to I wing, which is setting up an older prisoner wellbeing centre. Plans are in place for Storybook Dads (where prisoners record stories on CDs or DVDs to send to their children) to start again in the near future.

The work around Shannon Trust (a reading charity) and helping prisoners with the basics of reading has not been as effective over recent times. There is an urgent need for prison management, library provider, Novus and the Shannon Trust to discuss the problems associated with getting this successful programme effectively implemented across all wings, within the educational package and within the library.

The library service undertook an extensive survey with prisoners who did or did not access their facilities with a range of questions, including: how often do you use the library?; what do you think of the facilities and range of books provided?; do you know how to borrow and renew books?; what topics would you like us to stock in our range of books?, etc. The survey received over 100 responses from library and non-library users. The results are being looked at to further enhance the service for prisoners. The Board will review the results from the survey and monitor any changes implemented over the coming year.

The Board considers that the education department has had a satisfactory year and has the plans and structure in place to move forward at pace throughout 2024. The library service and package offered appears to continue to provide good support and learning opportunities for prisoners.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Workshop-based activities took place, with increasing numbers during the calendar year 2023, albeit with some closures due to:

- wing lockdowns because of staff shortages;
- staffing difficulties in getting prisoners to workshops;
- difficulties in appointing appropriate tutors towards the end of the year.

The vocational training programme on offer is continuing to be developed. Investment and support from Marston's Brewery has improved the staff mess and, subsequently, the education provider has worked with them to offer accredited training for prisoners, in line with employer standards, and offer jobs on release for prisoners who complete their course.

The construction vocational training programme has had challenges throughout the year with staffing shortages, and so is not yet fully re-established. At the end of the year, new tutors were appointed and the Board will monitor progress in 2024.

Vocational training delivered by Novus remained stable throughout the year and was largely unaffected by staff issues. However, towards the end of the year (October 2023 onwards), painting and decorating and joinery training courses were suspended due to tutor departures. The process to replace these tutors was lengthy, due to a lack of suitable candidates, which impacted on available activity spaces. These positions are expected to be filled at the beginning of the 2024 calendar year and courses/training in these areas should hopefully start soon after. The Board will monitor this over the coming year.

A trial in the workshops began at the end of 2023, whereby prisoner mentors worked on functional skills, with the prisoners present in the workshops. This is planned to be rolled out within every workshop and the initial trial is showing promising results.

A new Industry Manager was appointed at HMP Liverpool in April 2023. An experienced Industry Instructor, she has worked hard to ensure that all staff are distributed appropriately and given clear guidance for their work with prisoners.

HMP Liverpool Workshops are being rebranded as Liverpool Industries, to create a clear distinction between time in prison and work.

A number of new workshops have become operational in 2023. These include:

- Light assembly, producing goody bags to be sold in the prison visits' centre.
- A workshop with an external employer, refurbishing and recycling furniture.
- Bike and wheelchair refurbishment has been started and is being staffed by vulnerable prisoners. The instructors have also developed their own training, which leads to non-accredited recognition, and is being used as an example to show development and progression evidence in other workshops.
- The land-based activities area has been reopened after two years, providing space for 16 men. They will be developing all areas of the prison, with projects such as 'living walls' in healthcare, wing propagation, ponds and bee-keeping being set up. The Board will monitor this exciting development over the coming year.
- Two national projects are about to be implemented, namely GOOP (greener on the outside for prisons), which will see vulnerable and hard-to-reach prisoners access gardening activities for health and wellbeing development. Also, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) will be involved in cultivating and providing healthy plants to local charities and community groups to develop their own gardens.

Some of the more established workshops are up and running consistently again and these include:

- The prison's well-established textiles workshop has started to develop and widen its offer to enhance the learning environment activities, such as signage on shop-specific vocabulary and processes, personal development and British values;
- Accessible information books on shop processes have been compiled to support the instruction for neurodiverse prisoners.

A review of activity spaces and health and safety visits to each work area has shown that activity spaces have been created in 2023, with further opportunities planned for 2024.

During visits to the industries and key worker sessions throughout the year, the Board has noticed that, on some occasions, the men have been more engaged in activities and work than in the previous year. Where this has not been the case, instructors have been quick to adapt their working practices and make senior leaders aware of this. Where activities were not open or full, this was often due to lockdowns or staff absences/shortages, but also due to a lack of work to be undertaken. Some progress had been made by the end of the reporting year to widen the scope and range of activities within each workshop. The prison is aware of the need to further engage the men fully in their respective industries and to expand the number and range of opportunities. The Board will continue to monitor this area of the prison's work.

A range of activities and jobs took place as follows:

Out of cell vocational training				
Course	Max Numbers	When allocated	No of Wings involved	Frequency
Joinery	9	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Plastering	9	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
On Wing Cleaning	7	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Painting & Decorating	9	Induction	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
CSCS Course	10	As Directed	All (excluding I Wing)	Variable
Staff Mess 'The Lock Inn'	10	As Directed	All (excluding I Wing)	13 Weeks
Total	54 (compared to 46 in 2022 calendar year)			

Activity areas/key workers		
Type of job/activity	Numbers of prisoners involved	Frequency
Cleaners	90	Weekly
Painters	16	Weekly
Mentors	11	Weekly
Gym orderlies	2	Weekly
Reception orderlies	6	Weekly
Refresh team	2	Weekly
Kitchen team	25	Weekly
Printer	1	Weekly
Total	153 (compared to 147 in 2022 calendar year)	

Industries/key workers		
Type of job/activity	Numbers of prisoners involved	Frequency
Area party	16	Weekly
Laundry	26	Weekly
Leather workshop	16	Weekly
Textiles workshop	20	Weekly
Food packing	38	Weekly
Signage and printing	12	Weekly
Wheelchairs/bikes	10	Weekly
Land Based Act.	16	Weekly
Light Assembly	12	Weekly
Refurbishment	18	Weekly
Total	184 (compared to 133 in 2022 calendar year)	

Despite the challenging circumstances of the last year, which have been outlined, the Board considers that the vocational training and work of the prison has been maintained to a satisfactory level, with plans in place to move forward significantly this year in both increasing activity spaces and with training and progression in the workshops.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Offender management and prisoner progression both in and out of the prison has continued with the 'normal regime' back in operation. The prison offender managers (POMs) work effectively with prisoners to progress them through their 'sentence identify offence focused work' to address their offending behaviour and, hopefully, reduce their risk of re-offending. The POMs continue to liaise with the community offender manager (COMs) to support prisoners being released from custody to complete handovers in a timely manner and ensure release plans are in place. In addition, a short-term sentence function team has been set up to help prisoners who have received a short sentence. This is still in the early stages of being embedded into the prison and the Board will monitor the implementation of this initiative in the coming year.

Following 'occasionally changing' criteria laid down by the Ministry of Justice, the transfer of men in and out of the prison has been managed as per legislation and guidance set at any particular moment. Over the reporting year, the prison has had good success in transferring category B and D prisoners to other suitable sites, thus enabling them to progress their sentence and be managed in appropriate security category establishments. However, due to external pressures of the prison population, the POMs team has had some difficulties transferring long-term category C men to appropriate training establishments, which then hinders the men from completing appropriate courses to help address their offending behaviour. Also, despite the hard work and determination of prison managers and the sentence management team, there has been some considerable difficulty in transferring a small number of prisoners with mental health needs to more appropriate settings. This was due to a lack of relevant spaces across the prison or hospital estate nationally (see 5.2). It has been a significant concern over recent months and IMB will continue to monitor this issue in the coming year.

The POMs try to have regular contact with prisoners either face to face or via the in-cell phone system. This effective contact allows the POM to develop a professional relationship with men on their case load to assist their offending behaviour and prepare them for release back into the community. However, as previously stated, regular contact was not always maintained to the standard the sentence management team have set themselves, due to staffing issues with the prison and the OMU. The problem has been further exacerbated by the high volume of prisoners passing through reception on a weekly basis.

Recategorisation reviews for prisoners have continued following national guidelines, helping to ensure that each relevant prisoner is managed at the appropriate category. During the year, the team managed to undertake 763, which is higher than in the previous year (657). In addition, the prison has also undertaken an initial categorisation of 1,116 prisoners over the year, compared with 2,190 in the previous year. This big decrease is mainly due to the number of sentenced prisoners received from other prisons to ease the population in those establishments which, in turn, has decreased numbers received directly from the courts.

Home detention curfew (HDC) continues to be managed well by offender management staff, with the aim of trying to get prisoners on, or as near as possible, to their home detention curfew eligibility date (HDCED). In total throughout the year, 242 men were released on HDC; of these, 127 were released on their HDCED.

Recently, delays in safeguarding checks by the police have had a knock-on effect in delaying men getting out on their HDCED. This problem is not unique to HMP Liverpool and has been raised as a national issue.

The Board is of the view that the offender and prisoner management team have had a successful year. This is despite the challenging circumstances of dealing with a number of local and national difficulties, coupled with the changing guidance and criteria laid down by the Ministry of Justice in response to national demands on the prison population and availability across the prison estate.

7.4 Family Contact

From the beginning of the year, social visits' slots were back to normal. Families are able to book social visits via the Government website or over the phone with the booking line. Following a period of increased complaints to Partners of Prisoners (POPs) and the prison before the reporting year, POPS now runs monthly tests to the booking line to see how long it takes to get through. This has shown a good improvement, with POPS seeing a reduced number of families complaining about the booking line.

Social visits are run twice daily, with one hour per slot (1.45- 2.45pm and 3.15- 4.15pm). Visitors are advised by POPS to arrive 30 minutes before their visit time. POPS is now also supporting with the 'no social visits' list, supporting prisoners who receive no social visits or make family calls. POPS will refer to the chaplaincy prison visitor programme when needed.

POPS records of visitors for the year 2023

Month	Male	Female	-2 Years	2 - 4 years	5 - 16 years	17+ years	Ethnic Minorities included	Disabilities included	Total No of visitors
Jan	473	924	78	100	252	9	114	19	1836
Feb	489	998	83	101	260	13	135	21	1944
Mar	523	1060	72	223	246	11	128	22	2135
Apr	501	1046	101	143	279	43	88	16	2113
May	559	1147	100	138	276	13	143	33	2233
Jun	522	1103	124	149	249	5	144	22	2152
Jul	467	1019	113	112	245	2	24	146	1958
Aug	456	1063	83	87	317	14	173	30	2020
Sep	390	962	74	83	169	15	112	22	1693
Oct	443	1010	62	105	214	20	144	28	1854
Nov	482	920	41	109	182	18	118	25	1752
Dec	527	1053	52	71	255	16	106	21	1974
Total	5832	12305	983	1421	2944	179	1429	405	23664

The new security measures are up and running smoothly, which enables a smooth booking-in experience. There are prominent notices warning visitors that they may be searched and about contraband. This information is also displayed in a range of languages in the visits' centre. POPS staff will also use The Big Word translation/interpreting phone service when needed. The Board is pleased with the security measures in place for social visits, which was urgently needed.

There is a great deal of satisfaction with the visiting process, including:

- positive staff approach to visits from staff, visitors and prisoners alike;
- increased involvement of prisoners in the routine, e.g. prisoners operate and run the snack bar, with profits going back into the 'prison visits pot';
- effective and professional involvement of POPs, which is widely respected by families and prisoners;
- refurbished facilities being put in place, e.g. new toys, family play/learning activities, which are ordered with profits from snack bar sales, etc.
- newly introduced age-appropriate boxes for families to enjoy during their visit;
- Imminent plans for an arts and crafts area in the visits' hall, where children on visits will be able to make something for their loved one in custody.

The prison now has their own neurodiversity lanyards for families to use when going through the booking-in process. This makes staff and other visitors aware that the visitor may have a hidden disability and may need further support going through the process of visiting a family member or friend.

POPs has re-started its bi-monthly family forum, which is chaired by the head of POPs. The lead officer for each prison department is invited, including operations, chaplaincy, safer custody, mental health, etc. Most departments are represented at the forum. In addition, up to 12 families are also represented, following an invite to all families who attend. As an incentive, families can access an extra social visit for attending, which has proved to be an effective strategy. The Board has attended some of these successful forums and will continue to monitor them throughout the coming year.

A number of revived, or new, initiatives are now taking place as part of the prison visiting regime. These include:

- Family Days take place a minimum of six times per year. These are visits by families where prisoners are able to engage with their families in activities such as art, reading, playing games, etc., usually around an agreed theme, such as Christmas and Easter. Around 12 prisoners at a time are able to join this activity with members of their families. There is a waiting list of families who wish to take part in this activity. With support from POPS, the prison ran six extra Christmas family days, one for each wing, which were well received and attended. POPS intends to repeat these extra sessions in the coming year and to also run an 'adult only' family day for vulnerable prisoners.
- A new baby programme is going from strength to strength: during the first four weeks of a baby's life, photos and updates (such as information on the new baby) can be sent to the prison and uploaded to a prisoner's personal account. Within 48 hours of a baby's birth, a social video call is set up for the respective prisoner, mother (and baby). All these activities give the prisoner an insight into their child's early days, which will create important memories.
- The visits' regime is working on introducing a new 'intervention room' which will hopefully look like a living room when completed. This will be able to be booked for the new baby programme, new baby visits, compassionate visits, appropriate skin-to-skin contact, and mental health support, including appropriate programmes of counselling, etc. This room is, unfortunately, still not available, as work is still to be carried out. Hopefully, it will be up and

running by summer 2024. The Board will monitor the introduction and effectiveness of this new initiative.

We continue to be impressed with the prison visiting regime and the speed that arrangements have returned to pre-COVID levels (and even further enhanced). The Board considers that the prison and the POPs team are providing very good support for visitors, with many exciting initiatives planned for the new year.

7.5 Resettlement planning

The resettlement Board continues to be well attended by men who are to be released from custody within 12 weeks. At this board, men can discuss their release plans with partner agencies, including accommodation, setting up bank accounts, NHS contacts, etc. The target of getting 90% of men into accommodation on their first night following release is met. Referrals are being completed by the COM, in liaison with the POM, for men who have identified themselves as having no accommodation on the day of release.

On a small number of occasions, prisoners indicate that they have not been able to attend the resettlement board on the planned day due to a variety of reasons, including:

- a lack of escort staff to bring them from the wing;
- lockdown in operation as a result of staffing shortages;
- a clash with healthcare needs (e.g. collecting daily medication at the same time as a transfer to the resettlement board is taking place, etc.)

Prisoners due for release who fail to turn up for the resettlement board, for whatever reason, are relisted to attend the following week, even if it was their own choice not to attend in the first place.

Vulnerable prisoners can attend a separate resettlement board from the main population.

The Board continues to be impressed with the work of the resettlement team and it continues to be welcomed by prisoners, families, and staff.

Locally, the commissioned rehabilitative services of Seetec (Merseyside) and Ingeus (Greater Manchester) have a part-time presence in the prison and have been a valuable source of information and assistance for men within their respective areas. The sentence management team can refer those men being released out of area to their home probation region, but pre-release visits would be remote; i.e. video link."

. This has been a long-term problem, which needs to be rectified as soon as possible. Under the present circumstances, such prisoners are supported, wherever possible, by the short-term function team or the POM to, hopefully, address any accommodation issues.

The accommodation lead continues to support men on release, identifying areas where the prison has fallen short in supporting men on release from prison.

The accommodation lead reviews outcomes as recorded on 'nDelius' (the database and software for holding information regarding probation service access for prisoners on release) for men being released from HMP Liverpool, thus highlighting any

difficulties or problems for men going into accommodation on their day of release. A total of 1,268 men were released from HMP Liverpool during the 2023 year, with only 59 negative outcomes, which represents a positive year, in the Board's view. The accommodation lead continues to provide advice and guidance for staff with regard to overcoming accommodation issues on release of prisoners.

It has continued to be difficult for POMs to maintain regular contact with offenders due to staffing issues within the offender management department, which has resulted in them having a high case load over short periods of time. POMs are maintaining contact with offenders on their case load via in-cell phones, face-to-face interviews and via Teams, thus allowing POMs to complete evidence-based risk management assessments (OASys) and pre-release parole reports in a timely manner. The introduction of Teams has allowed prisoners to have three-way meetings with their POM and COM, which has played a vital role in passing information across the various key staff members so they are better able to manage the risk and prepare for the release of the prisoner. Despite the staffing issues, a lot of good work has been completed by the POMs to keep the OASys backlog down. The backlog at year end stands at 11 being overdue, from a high of 53 during the year.

Due to internal staffing absence and vacancies, the basic custody screening tool (BCST) part 1 is not being completed within the guidelines of 72 hours from point of reception. This has had an effect on the completion of BCST part 2, which acts as a guide to an individual prisoner's needs regarding release planning. IMB understands that this problem is being addressed and supported by senior managers at the prison to ensure BCST part 1s are completed on time. The Board will monitor progress made during the coming year.

Prisoners' concerns regarding the management of their sentences are often a reason for the Board to receive an application. Concerns range from sentence management following transfer from another prison, upset about being refused a revised prisoner status, concern over a release date, etc. The Board has found that the sentence management team is always approachable to deal with prisoners' concerns. From the Board's observations, the team makes sure a query is responded to quickly and fairly in the vast majority of cases.

During the last quarter of the reporting year, in response to the prison population being high and thus stretching the capacity across the prisons' estate, the Ministry of Justice introduced its 'prisoner early release programme'. This allowed certain prisoners, across a limited number of prisons, to become eligible for early release - within 18 days of their expected release date. HMP Liverpool was involved in this initiative and despite concerns about the scheme, such as the effect on prisoners' morale of those not eligible, logistics involved in administering the scheme fairly, for example, the response from the sentence management team helped minimise such concerns.

Despite the ongoing difficulties, the Board considers that the sentence management team continues to deliver a good resettlement programme for the prison population.

8. The work of the IMB

The Board has operated significantly below its recommended complement of members for several years. This was no different in 2023, when low member numbers had impacted on our monitoring capability and placed additional pressures on individual members. During the middle of the reporting year to the end, there were only three fully trained and active members. Others were either on sabbatical or in different stages of their induction training.

Trained Board members have spent considerable time supporting newer members, some of whom have been unable to continue in the role due to personal circumstances. Training newer members impacts on trained members' time to monitor outcomes for prisoners, an issue the Board has raised nationally.

Notwithstanding the above challenges, the Board has been able to increase its presence amongst both prisoners and staff. We have noted an improved professional relationship with the prison's senior leadership team since the recruitment of a new Governor. The Board looks forward to increasing this professional relationship over the next year to improve our independent monitoring and outcomes for prisoners.

The Board and prison governance have embraced hybrid monitoring to increase its monitoring activities and offer more flexibility to members with external commitments such as employment, family and caring duties. We would like the prison to further support us, wherever possible, through increasing its capacity to offer hybrid meetings as standard practice, to enhance the Board's monitoring capability further. Providing hybrid monitoring options allows a more diverse range of volunteers to become members, thus increasing monitoring and outcomes for prisoners.

During the reporting year, the Board received significantly fewer applications from prisoners than in previous reporting years. We must note that with an increased presence within the prison, prisoners have verbally raised queries with the Board which we have responded to, meaning that not all prisoner applications are necessarily recorded.

Board Membership	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9 (total – breakdown below): 3 (trained and active) 1 (trained and on sabbatical) 2 (not trained and on sabbatical) 3 (in training)
Total number of visits to the establishment	316

Applications (issues) raised with the IMB			
Code	Subject	Previous reporting year (2022)	Current reporting year (2023)
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	19	15
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	10	6
C	Equality	9	10
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	14	7
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	56	26
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	12	17
F	Food and kitchens	21	7
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	53	36
H1	Property within the establishment	34	15
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	35	29
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	8	2
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	45	38
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	24	27
K	Transfers	7	5
L	Miscellaneous	13	16
	Total number of applications	360	256

The Board received a total of 216 individual prisoner applications during the reporting year, with some individual applications requesting support in more than one area, which explains the 256 figure.

Annex A

List of service providers

Service	Provider
Education	Novus
Library services	Liverpool City Council
Healthcare	Spectrum
Mental Health	Mersey Care
Facilities	Amey
Advice and information on drugs, alcohol, homelessness, prison, health and wellbeing	Change, Grow, Live (CGL): a local voluntary organisation



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at imb@justice.gov.uk