



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Pentonville

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

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any 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 to the prison's records. The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI Pentonville, on Caledonian Road in the London Borough of Islington, is a category B local prison, primarily serving the Magistrates' and Crown Courts in north and east London. The four cell blocks remain much as they were when the prison was opened in 1842.

Pentonville holds category B and C male adults and young adults (YAs) aged 18 to 25. Ordinarily about a third of the adults held are on remand, but as reported last year, this proportion had much increased, and at the end of this reporting year was approximately 63%.¹

The certified normal accommodation, which is the normal capacity of the prison as judged by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), is 909 prisoners. The operational capacity, which is the maximum number of prisoners it can hold without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime, is 1,205. At the end of the reporting year, there were approximately 1,195 prisoners (of whom 103 were YAs aged 18 to 25, comprising 8.65% of the prison population).

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

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

There have been some positive improvements in both Reception and Early Days in Custody (EDIC). (4.1)

Incidents of self-harm have increased by 13% compared to last year, but there were no identifiable themes behind this. (4.2)

Inadequate completion of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) documentation used in the care-planning process for prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm remained an issue, with important elements regularly not completed and insufficient evidence of meaningful conversations. The ACCT process and its supporting documentation is a problem and contributed to these poor standards. It is overly complicated, illogically set out and should be revised. (4.2)

Where there is a death in custody, an inquest with a jury is held. There has been a significant backlog since Covid-19. Eight inquests were concluded this year and five are still outstanding. It is important that these happen as soon after the event as possible so that lessons may be learnt if necessary. (4.2)

The Board observed that the Safer Custody department in the prison struggled to adequately fulfil its remit. This is due to management changes, time taken up by attending inquests and understaffing, particularly towards the end of the reporting year. (4.2)

Pentonville would like to provide the growing number of Vulnerable Prisoners (VPs) with more space and a better regime but needs headroom in capacity to make that happen safely. HMPPS support and a national strategy for the surge in number of VPs are needed to provide more than just humane containment. (4.2)

Violence levels increased by 28% on the previous reporting year and increased steadily over the last few months of the reporting year. The appointment of a Violence Reduction Officer meant that reasons for violence could be more easily identified. However, the officer was re-deployed at various times during the year which reduced the opportunity for thorough investigations and the identification of the causes of violence. (4.3)

Fair and humane treatment

The lack of privacy and cramped conditions cannot be said to be decent or humane. In addition, there are major problems with the fabric and infrastructure. The buildings, including cells, are porous to continual infestations of rats, mice, cockroaches and flies. Blitzes by Rentokil provided only temporary respite. (5.1)

There is a lack of confidence amongst prison staff in the value of referrals of more serious offences committed in the prison to both the Independent Adjudicator (IA) and the police. (5.2)

The Prisoner Platform Meeting is a well organised formal monthly meeting that has grown consistently in its effectiveness and influence. (5.3)

Key work has never had a chance to embed itself and limps along in a moribund state with some months better than others. (5.3)

Prisoners in a wheelchair do not have access to many areas of the prison, including some of the exercise yards. There are very few cells adapted to their needs. Pentonville is not a suitable prison to hold prisoners with reduced mobility. (5.4)

Redeployment is driven by a shortage of staff and impacts many aspects of the regime. Until the redeployment of Equality staff stops, the Equality team won't be able to give the prisoners with protected characteristics the support that they need. (5.4)

The roof above the mosque is in a terrible state of disrepair and leaks. The Board believes that the large temporary tarpaulin over the mosque ceiling is an inappropriate fix for a space that has been allocated as a place of worship and the roof and ceiling should be repaired properly and promptly. (5.5)



Temporary tarpaulin over the mosque ceiling

The Basic level of the incentive scheme restricts the number of showers that a prisoner can take. This undermines decency and must not be included in the local incentives policy. (5.6)

There has been no periodic oversight and quality assurance of complaints responses to prisoners this year. The Board has observed some poorly written and unhelpful responses. (5.7)

The Prisoners' Property Framework which was implemented by HMPPS in 2022 has made no discernible difference to the efficiency of the system for getting property to prisoners. (5.8)

Health and wellbeing

The healthcare system of sending an initial acknowledgement to a prisoner's application stopped in October 2023. The reason given was that there were so many applications that it was an inefficient use of resources. The consequent lack of

communication was an issue that led to many applications being received by the IMB from prisoners. (6.1)

The lack of beds in secure hospitals has led to very unwell men remaining in the prison and men staying on the wings or in the care and separation unit (CSU) awaiting a place in the prison's in-patient unit. (6.3)

Many prisoners spent around 22 hours a day locked in their cells. The Board considers that this an unacceptably long time to be locked away, reduces opportunities for rehabilitation, is inhumane and amounts to the warehousing of a significant proportion of Pentonville's population. (6.5)

Progression and resettlement

Unreliable and late unlocking by wing staff remained a frustration for education tutors and valuable teaching time was lost. In late March, attendance was approximately 55% from an allocation of 75%. (7.1)

Additional demands have been placed on the Offender Management Unit (OMU) because of a flurry of government-imposed measures taken to manage the overcrowding in prisons. The additional work in identifying prisoners for relocation to other prisons, early release and changes to rules on home detention curfews have all placed extra work on an already fragile team without extra resource. The Board thinks that HMPPS should recognise these extra pressures on this department, and resource it accordingly. (7.3)

Despite some ground-breaking initiatives taken by the prison, with few dedicated facilities for young adults the Board remains concerned that they continue to be held in Pentonville at all. (7.3)

Prisoners on remand for long periods had insufficient support on leaving prison particularly when released immediately from court. Without release plans, rehabilitation is less likely to be effective. (7.5)

Post report update

Board concerns about a rat infestation in the kitchen, and the lack of serious and timely action to address it, continued beyond the cut-off date for this report (31 March 2024). The IMB wrote to the Minister of State for Prisons on 8 April 2024, and Pentonville shut the main kitchen down on 10 April. The Islington Environmental Health Officer inspected the next day, and fully supported the decision to shut it. Temporary kitchens were installed and a programme of works and vermin extermination was put in place. The kitchen was successfully reopened on 19th July and was free of rats. A fuller report on the outcome of this programme will appear in the next IMB Annual Report. (5.1)

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

What measures is the Minister planning to take to reduce overcrowding in the prison system, in light of the fact that the prison estate nationally is almost at capacity and

projected to increase still further before additional spaces become available under the current prison building programme?

How can the Minister justify the lack of urgency by HMPPS to address the appalling state of the main mosque roof?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The 2022 Prisoners' Property Framework has yet to have any positive impact on the transfer of property between prisons. Will HMPPS commit to an evidence-based review of the Framework?

The ACCT documentation (revised in 2022) is poorly drafted, overly complicated and many staff are not able to complete it adequately. Will HMPPS commit to an urgent review of this essential, potentially lifesaving, documentation?

Will HMPPS provide extra support to the OMU who are under unsustainable pressure from dealing with the multiple government-imposed measures taken to manage overcrowding alongside their business as usual workload?

Growing numbers of prisoners accused or convicted of sex offences are held in Pentonville. Delivering a meaningful and rehabilitative regime to this vulnerable group safely is very challenging. Will HMPPS commit to delivering greater local support and a national strategy?

TO THE GOVERNOR

Will you commit to ringfence the work of the wider safer custody team, including in particular the Violence Reduction Officer and Equality staff?

Do you commit to remove the restriction on the number of showers that a prisoner on Basic can take on the grounds that it infringes the prisoner's right to decency?

Will you commit to reinstate auditing of the quality of responses sent by the prison to prisoner complaints?

What will you do to resurrect the important key worker scheme?

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

There were 21,962 movements into (10,733) and out of (11,229) the prison Reception this year. The population is made up of 63% remand prisoners.

Since last year there have been some positive improvements in both Reception and EDIC.

- Late arrival of prisoner transport vans operated by Serco was down, and communication with Serco has improved, although there were still occasions when the prison was unable to reach Serco control.
- The prisoner escort records (PERs), which accompany every prisoner, were previously often observed to be inconsistent in accuracy and adequacy. However, this reporting year improvements have been made.
- On arrival at Reception all relevant checks, processes and assessments were in place, and the Board saw a high level of professionalism and care from staff and peer mentors.
- Prison orderlies (trusted prisoners), together with Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to other prisoners), offered a friendly presence, providing the new arrivals with their kit and a welcome booklet. A national induction booklet was available in multiple languages.
- The process of moving the men speedily from Reception on to the induction wing has improved, with all staff members having been trained to conduct first night interviews.

First Night. A concerted effort has been made to improve the condition of first night cells. Cells were generally graffiti free, clean and fully equipped. First time prisoners should be checked throughout their first night, but this did not always happen, and the Board raised concerns with the prison. Detoxing prisoners were either taken straight to the detox wing or moved the following day. There is ongoing work to ensure those who move to the detox unit receive a full induction. Men were issued with a telephone credit of £2.80. However, there were reports of men not being able to make a call on their first night. Staff were generally good at reporting these issues and helping the men make calls.

Induction. Prison induction sessions were led by an Insider (selected prisoners who help other prisoners) and a Listener with a prison officer present, and an induction video specific to Pentonville was shown. A Learning and Skills induction took place on day two, during which the men took the Basic Skills Assessment (BSA). This determined their eligibility for work or education. Twice a week Healthcare attended induction, giving a presentation on health and wellbeing. On the days Healthcare did not attend, the presentation was conducted by the Insiders.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Self-harm increased by 13% on the previous reporting year with approximately 610 recorded incidents. There was a good level of recording of the reasons given for self-

harm but there were no consistently identifiable themes. Levels of self-harm in late March were very high, at four times the level a year earlier, partly attributable to several prolific self-harmers.

Monthly safety meetings were held and were sometimes attended by Listeners and prisoner representatives. A Weekly Safety Overview was produced with analysis of self-harm, violence, disorder and gang issues, in addition to more detailed data for the monthly meetings.

ACCT is the care-planning process for prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm. 674 ACCTs were opened during the reporting year, similar to last year. ACCT reviews were rarely overdue but there was a considerable backlog of 7-day post-closure reviews. Board members periodically attended reviews and generally found them to be well-conducted, and write-ups were usually thorough. However, inadequate completion of ACCT documentation remained an issue with important elements regularly not completed and insufficient evidence of meaningful conversations. There is a detailed ACCT documentation audit process in place, but the relevant checks are not consistent and the Board has not seen any noticeable improvement in the quality of ACCT documentation. In the Board's opinion the format of the standard ACCT documentation is a problem and contributed to these poor standards: it is overly complicated, illogically set out and should be revised.

Two prisoners sadly died in this reporting year compared with one last year. There were nine inquests in the reporting year. One inquest, into a death that occurred in 2018, was held in February 2024, and the coroner's verdict was that it was self-inflicted. The inquest was a repeat of an inquest originally heard in 2019. Attendance at the Coroner's Court by senior staff, as observers, and by other witnesses, accounted for a significant amount of time.

Two prisoners sadly died in this reporting year, compared with one last year. There were nine inquests in the reporting year. An inquest into a death that occurred in 2018 was held in February 2024 and the coroner's verdict was that it was a self-inflicted death. This inquest was a repeat of an inquest originally heard in 2019.. Attendance at the Coroner's Court by senior staff as observers, and by others as witnesses, accounted for a significant amount of staff time.

Inquest conclusions on deaths in custody. Investigation reports by the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman (PPO) into deaths in custody were still to be completed in several cases. Completed reports are published on the PPO website. PPO recommendations were assimilated into an ongoing local Action Plan which is scrutinised regularly by the prison and HMPPS to ensure compliance. There are five inquests outstanding. One Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) report had been received from the Coroner by the end of the reporting year, with actions addressed to external health services rather than the prison, after a prisoner who was receiving regular external treatment for serious illness died.

Year of death	Inquest	Conclusion
2019	May 2023	Self-inflicted
	July 2023	Other non-natural
	November 2023	Self-inflicted
	December 2023	Misadventure
2020	September 2023	Natural causes
	November 2023	Self-inflicted
	February 2024	Self-inflicted
2021	September 2023	Natural causes

Table 1: Inquests into deaths in custody conducted in the reporting year

Listeners gave an average of 115 Listens per month, an increase on 74 last year which suggests troubled prisoners continue to value this support. Prisoners can also call the Samaritans Hotline from in-cell telephones. Around 55 calls per day were made to the Hotline from Pentonville.

Cell bells are the way in which prisoners can communicate from their cell in an emergency. The response times to cell bell calls were presented at monthly prison safety meetings. There was no noticeable improvement in response times compared to the previous reporting year, except on the induction wing which improved significantly. Only two wings achieved the target of an average of 80% of bells being answered within five minutes, and the figure for one of the wings was just 50%.

The Safer Custody department had a significant remit over violence and self-harm, including a Violence Reduction Officer who investigated daily incidents. The Board referred prisoners who felt unsafe and forwarded applications it received which were of concern. The Safer Custody Hotline was a contact point for members of the public to raise concerns about prisoners in Pentonville. However, due to management changes, time taken up by attending inquests and understaffing particularly towards the end of the reporting year, it was the Board's view that the department struggled to adequately fulfil its remit.

Vulnerable prisoners unit (VPU)

The national surge in the number of VPs is reflected in the increase to over 100 VPs in Pentonville compared to 75-80 last year. The Board has no concerns this year about compromised safety. The focus this reporting year was on regime, particularly for the approximately 50 VPs held on the induction wing (separate to the main designated VP space located on another wing). Minimal last year, an improved regime, within the limited physical space, was devised by the end of this year. Constraints on job opportunities continued on the designated VPU. A pod was used for education classes and a chess club. Regular library visits operate for all VPs. Pentonville would like to provide the growing number of VPs with more space and a better regime but need headroom in capacity to make that happen safely. HMPPS support *and* a national strategy for the surge in number of VPs are needed to provide more than just humane containment.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Violence levels increased by 28% on the previous reporting year to an average of 50 incidents per month (30% of these on staff). Of these, 43 assaults on prisoners were

serious (up 8%) and 16 assaults on staff were serious (unchanged). The number of assaults varied from month to month but increased steadily over the last few months of the reporting year, with the number in February being double that 12 months earlier. High levels of contraband circulating in the prison were thought to be a significant factor, as well as gang rivalries outside the prison causing tensions. In February the format of the 'Weekly Safety Overview' was changed to include a wing stability report to try to focus on specific areas of concern, and a significant movement of prisoners out of Pentonville was carried out in late March in an attempt to curb violence levels.

The reinstatement of the role of Violence Reduction (VR) Officer meant that reasons for violence could be more easily identified. However, the VR Officer was re-deployed at various times during the year which reduced the opportunity for thorough investigations and identification of the causes of violence.

Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP). CSIP is a process used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of being violent. In its last Annual Report the Board expressed disappointment at the low levels of prisoners being referred for a CSIP. This year, the number of prisoners on a CSIP averaged about 16, which the Board thinks is considerably lower than would be expected for a prison of Pentonville's size and complexity. Despite discussion of this in safety meetings and acknowledgement that more staff education about CSIP was needed, referrals of prisoners to CSIP had not risen by the end of the reporting year. Given the potential benefit of this intervention to YAs in particular, it was disappointing that it was not used more.

Gang issues. Monthly security meetings focused on detailed data about prisoners with gang affiliations, with Pentonville continuing to have a high number of these. Gang issues continued to present a challenge to the prison with capacity pressures making it ever more difficult to house "non-associates" on different wings, and gang rivalries on the outside causing tensions and increasing violence inside. The prison still had no external specialist help with combatting gang conflict. There were also known to be members of organised crime groups in the prison who it was thought played a major role in the sourcing and distribution of contraband and were a significant cause of instability.

4.4 Use of force (UoF)

There were 895 instances of UoF over the reporting year (compared to 798 last year). The most common reasons for using force were prisoner non-compliance and violence, during searches of prisoners, and to stop assaults on members of staff. Of the instances over the year, 536 involved the use of full control and restraint, while 359 involved a mixture of personal safety and guiding holds. 60% of the incidents in the first three months of 2024 involved prisoners who already had a violence alert on their prison records. 45% of the men restrained had identified neurodiversity issues. De-escalation was carried out whenever possible. There were 23 planned interventions. The number of UoF incidents for which there was body-worn video cameras (BWVC) footage increased to above 50%, and CCTV footage, where available, along with BWVC footage, were regularly examined. Good and bad practice were identified with the relevant staff receiving feedback. Increased violence levels, which were particularly high among the 18-25 year age group, meant an increase in the use of force, although the management of rival gang populations in

conjunction with security moves helped to manage the situation. PAVA (an incapacitant spray) was introduced in July 2023 and was drawn twice but not used during the reporting year. The Board recognised the appropriate scrutiny and management of UoF in Pentonville.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

A new temporary pedestrian access gate was constructed, equipped with technology to search people, bags and goods thoroughly as they came into the prison. The old gate will now be refurbished.

The prison had to trace the routes in for contraband and react. Known routes included:

- Reception, where scanning equipment can detect items concealed internally but the numerous bags of prisoners' property must still be searched by hand.
- Visits, where CCTV and detection dogs are routinely used.
- Contraband thrown over the perimeter wall – prison patrol dogs and police patrols of the external perimeter disrupt crime.
- Staff corruption. The prison was aware that organised crime groups were recruiting people to get jobs in prisons. When a member of staff is arrested and charged, the deterrent impact is slow due to time taken to get a case to court. For example, two court cases starting at the end of the reporting year were from 2022.

Illicit items data is collected weekly. For the last two months of the reporting year the total number of phones found was 53 ranging from one to ten per week and for drugs it was 26 ranging from zero to ten per week. Drugs of choice remained cannabis and spice. Hooch (illicit alcohol) had a winter surge. Mandatory drug testing stayed at a consistent level to the previous reporting year.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, food

Accommodation. Pentonville was built in Victorian times to house just 540 men. There has been no significant increase in cell accommodation since then. Over the course of the reporting year, the unlock figure rose from 1,140 to 1,195. Cells measuring 12 x 8 feet, built to house a single prisoner, were typically occupied by two men (sometimes one of whom would be in a wheelchair), with bunk beds, a table, chair and a toilet. Some cells had rudimentary screening for the toilet, others had none. In-cell TVs and phones helped alleviate boredom and allowed contact with the outside world.

The lack of privacy and cramped conditions cannot be said to be decent or humane. In addition, there are major problems with the fabric and infrastructure of the buildings. The buildings, including cells, are porous to continual infestations of mice, cockroaches and flies. Blitzes by Rentokil provided only temporary respite.

The majority of complaints to the IMB about living conditions related to the antiquated heating and plumbing systems, urgently in need of complete renovation.

Some of the higher landings experienced intolerable temperatures in the summer, made worse by new windows which did not allow air flow. There were recurrent problems with plumbing and drainage, and problems with heating and hot water occur regularly.

Several showers were refurbished to a good standard, but others were observed to be smelly and dirty.

The CSU continued to experience blocked drains leading to extremely unpleasant conditions for all who live and work there.

Food. An average of one complaint per month was received, mostly about special diets. £2.70 had been allocated this year per prisoner per day, which was the national prison average, but £3 was the actual spend. The previous year the funding for food was £2.30. Staff numbers were sufficient but there was a high turnover of prisoners due to the latter being transferred or released. Security checks were particularly stringent meaning some delays in prisoners being able to work in the kitchen. Some men complained that they were fed insufficient portions. The breakfast pack was small. Many prisoners had to compensate by purchasing food from the canteen, but this was not an option available to everyone. From routine sampling of the food by Board members, the quality was generally observed to be satisfactory.



The breakfast pack was small

However, the main issue was a rat infestation in the main kitchen, particularly since November. Rat droppings, rat vomit and other excrement were regularly seen in the kitchen, and the service provided by Rentokil did not solve the problem, with a lack of an escalation plan when the problem persisted. This was a serious health and safety hazard which the Board considered senior management did not deal with in a sufficiently serious and timely manner.

Post report update

Board concerns about the rat infestation in the kitchen, and the lack of serious and timely action to address it, continued beyond the cut-off date for this report (31 March 2024). It resulted in the IMB co-chairs writing to the Minister of State for Prisons on 8 April 2024, stating that the if the prison did not refer itself to the London Borough of Islington Environmental Health department, the IMB would.

Pentonville shut the main kitchen down on 10 April, and the Environmental Health Officer inspected the next day. The inspector fully supported the decision to shut it down. Temporary kitchens were installed, and a programme of works and vermin extermination was put in place. The kitchen was successfully reopened on 19th July and was free of rats. A fuller report on the outcome of this programme will appear in the next IMB Annual Report.

5.2 Segregation

The CSU at Pentonville has 11 cells. Often cells are out of commission due to the deteriorating fabric of the building, dirty protests or prisoners vandalising their cells. The consistent presence of rodents, cockroaches and fly infestations adds to the stressful environment for both prisoners and staff. The cells are in very poor condition with stained toilets, sinks and damp walls. There were 344 occasions where men were held in regular segregation cells over the reporting year. The average length of stay was 4.75 days. There was one 42 day review. Special accommodation cells were only used three times during the reporting year. All UoF in the CSU was scrutinised by the prison. The Board observed staff upholding a

consistent, professional level of care to provide a safe and secure environment for the men. Daily visits by the chaplaincy, duty governor, mental health and healthcare staff were maintained; Board members visited the CSU several times each week. CSU reviews were observed to be fair, detailed and thoughtfully managed.

Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) meetings were held quarterly to ensure that the Prison Service Order on segregation was implemented and adhered to, and that the training and educational needs of relevant staff were reviewed.

Adjudications were held nearly every day for offences committed by prisoners. Limited capacity in segregation and poor administration meant that adjudication decisions often had to be delayed. This impacted on the prison's ability to give proportionate awards such as cellular confinement.

The quarterly adjudication standardisation group reviewed the data and identified any emerging themes or variations. The prison's strategies to decrease gang violence helped reduce the number of adjudications. There were 2,499 adjudications over the reporting year, compared to 2,893 last year. There were 672 referrals to the police, and 316 to the Independent Adjudicator (IA) who held fortnightly sessions which were limited to 30 cases per month. Due to the cap on how many IA cases could be heard, a backlog developed, leading to some having to be dismissed as they were out of time when they were at last put in front of an IA. This lack of confidence in the value of referrals to both IA and the police (who did not always deal punctually with cases either) meant that procedural justice was not consistently implemented. A fact of which the prisoners were fully aware.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

Prisoner Platform Meeting. This forum has grown consistently in its effectiveness and influence. It is a well organised formal monthly meeting. Prisoner representatives have shown enthusiasm and commitment and there has been regular attendance by senior staff. Dialogue has been constructive and positive, with the meetings overwhelmingly good-natured in tone. There has been frustration at the time it has taken to effect change in some areas, where prison systems have seemed particularly rigid, but there have been positive results, notably in relation to canteen and the production of a catalogue that prisoners can buy larger items from. The respect with which the meeting was viewed is evidenced by its being used as a forum to discuss the new local prisoner pay policy and plans to ask it to help devise a new training manual for Insiders.

Key Work. The Key Work scheme was introduced nationally in 2018 to improve relationships between officers and prisoners and thus enhance rehabilitation and reduce re-offending. Unfortunately, due to staff shortages and a lack of experience, it never really had a chance to embed itself and become a stable resource for the prisoners. Much depended on levels of staffing and the many other demanding regime priorities that must be met. Key work limps along in a moribund state with some months better than others.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The population in Pentonville is diverse and many prisoners with protected characteristics could be at risk of discrimination or might need additional support. On

one day in March 2024, out of a population of 1188 men, there were 349 prisoners with a declared disability, 652 prisoners identified as black and minority ethnic; there were 519 Christian prisoners and 423 Muslim prisoners, 37 prisoners were over 60 years old, and 103 prisoners were between the age of 18 and 20. There were also five prisoners who identified as transgender.

A new Equality manager started in July. Equality Meetings were held regularly, and prisoners' representatives were attending these meetings. Prisoners' forums have been held for some of the protected characteristics. The Equality team also scheduled awareness raising events and events promoting diversity. Ramadan and the celebration of religious festivals were very successfully organised by the prison. Transgender prisoners seemed to be well cared for and much thought was given to their care and safety in the prison.

The Discrimination Incident Report Forms (DIRF) received by the Equality department mainly concerned race, religion, and disability. There was no backlog of DIRFs at the end of the year.

Some prisoners with reduced mobility complained to the IMB about the effect that the lack of time out of cell had on their physical health. They were not able to do the exercise that they were advised to do. Prisoners in a wheelchair do not have access to many areas of the prison, including some of the exercise yards. There are very few cells adapted to their needs. The Board thinks that Pentonville is not a suitable prison to hold prisoners with reduced mobility.

The Equality team staff did welfare checks on some of the prisoners with more complex needs. Unfortunately, redeployment too often got in the way. If equality is not seen as a priority by the management and until redeployment of the Equality staff stops, the Equality team will not be able to give the prisoners with protected characteristics the support that they need.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The Chaplaincy team was made up of employed, sessional and volunteer chaplains, supported by a committed group of some 70 key-holding members who assisted with running courses and services. With an increasing number of Muslim prisoners, there was pressure on the Imams. Other chaplains visited these prisoners weekly and provided faith materials. In common with many prisons, there was no Rastafarian chaplain.

All prisoners who wished to attend weekly worship were permitted to do so. Full communal worship opened across all wings in November 2023, including for prisoners on the VPU, the Detox wing and Healthcare. The exception was Muslim Friday prayers which continued to be separated by wing, partly for reasons of capacity.

The prison has a chapel, a synagogue (which also served as a multi faith room) and a mosque. As reported by the Board for the past several years, the roof above the mosque was in state of terrible disrepair and leaks. It was fitted with a large temporary tarpaulin over the mosque carpet that catches the water and drains it through hoses into plastic buckets. This will remain indefinitely, until the roof completely fails. The Board believes that this is an inappropriate fix for a space that

has been allocated as a place of worship and that the roof and ceiling should be repaired properly as a priority.

As in similar prisons of its age, services were not accessible to prisoners with physical disabilities who were seen individually by Chaplaincy instead. On average some 350 prisoners attended a service or smaller group each week. Sometimes prisoners had to choose between showers, exercise and attending services. Good use was made of in-cell TV channels and faith-based publications. There was effective liaison with the kitchen over the celebration of religious festivals, and local parishes and charities provided gifts, literature and artefacts.

The team worked with OMU and Probation. Completion of the Sycamore Tree Restorative Justice programme (run three times a year) contributed to sentence plans. Unfortunately, a decision was made by the MoJ to no longer allow prisoners on this course to be 'kept on hold' at Pentonville (i.e. not be transferred to another prison to progress their sentence). This had the effect of potentially compromising sentence plans (i.e. a judge may have prescribed that a prisoner must complete the course as part of their sentence) and wasting this valuable resource through spaces being vacated part way through. Some volunteers were committed to Through the Gate work, with specialist support offered through links with London City Mission. The Signpost service, developed by a Chaplaincy volunteer, was available to those leaving the prison.

Chaplaincy had a major role in supporting bereaved prisoners and families of prisoners with terminal conditions. They were extensively involved in support for staff and family liaison in the event of a death in custody.

5.6 Incentives schemes

An Incentives scheme (formerly known as the Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme) is operated in the prison. Prisoners are at one of three incentive levels: they start at Standard level, are rewarded with an Enhanced level and can be sanctioned by being placed on Basic level.

The Board think that the range of privileges earned by Enhanced prisoners was too limited, amounting only to some extra visits, including exclusive family days, an increase in access to private cash, and higher rates of pay. There was insufficient difference between levels to incentivise. Those prisoners on the drug-free wing were given a range of privileges that were not available to those Enhanced prisoners in the general population (e.g. more time out of cell and access to communal cooking facilities). It would be fairer if these incentives were available to the rest of the Enhanced prisoner population, and whilst this difference exists it demotivates those who are not selected to be on that wing.

The average number of prisoners on the Basic level in the last three months of the reporting year was 45. Basic level includes removal of the incentive for a prisoner to have a TV in their cell, and restriction in their time out of cell to take part in Structured Wing Activity (SWA). Exercise and showers are also restricted.

Each prison is required to have a local incentives policy that should be reviewed annually. This did not happen during the reporting period. In certain areas, national policy explicitly constrains the Governor in what can be included in their local incentives policy. Pentonville's is non-compliant. Access to showers is limited to

three times per week for Basic level prisoners in Pentonville instead of daily. This undermines decency.

5.7 Complaints

Performance in responding to complaints on time continued to be closely monitored by the prison. In the latest data the IMB has received for February 2024, the majority of prison complaints were about property, healthcare, finance/cash and various accommodation/safety issues. This is similar to the most common categories in IMB applications, other than OMU which was the second largest IMB category. This is likely because OMU has a poor reputation for responding to queries from prisoners and contacting the IMB means that they receive a response. Regrettably, the prison did not maintain governor-led periodic oversight and quality assurance of complaints responses to prisoners this year. The Board has observed some poorly written and unhelpful responses being received by prisoners.

5.8 Property

Applications to the IMB regarding property have increased from 70 during the previous reporting year to 103 in the current year. There has been little improvement in the handling and management of prisoner property either on transfer between establishments or within the prison itself. Prisoners were also having to wait, sometimes for weeks, to receive packages that had been posted into the prison for them. The new Prisoners' Property Framework which was implemented by HMPPS in 2022 has made no discernible difference to the efficiency of the system for getting property to prisoners.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

For part of the year there was an Interim Head of Healthcare. There was a recruitment drive this year, particularly as New Models of Care (NMoC), which went live in August 2023, requires many more staff. Agency staff were employed in all areas though some transferred to become permanent staff. Others were regular agency staff at Pentonville. The main area of concern was in the pharmacy department where there were several pharmacist and pharmacy technician vacancies. This is a national problem.

There was no Care Quality Commission inspection during the reporting year.

Call Phill (Prisoner Health Information and Liaison Line) is a helpline for concerned relatives to contact the Healthcare team. It was introduced in 2022 and continued to be used this reporting year providing a direct link to prison healthcare. It has been used to the benefit of some patients and to reassure their relatives.

The 22-bed in-patient healthcare unit served prisoners with complex health issues. Board members visited at least once a week and generally men expressed satisfaction with their treatment. The unit was well managed but there were sometimes issues with a lack of experienced officers to support the staff, as was the case in the previous reporting year.

There were 157 applications to the IMB which referred to health concerns, 29 of these being from the same prisoner. Most applications about healthcare were about appointments and were resolved quickly. The patient engagement lead left during the year and bi-monthly Patient Forums were paused. A new lead was appointed near the end of the reporting period. The healthcare system of sending an initial acknowledgement to all men stopped in October 2023. The reason given was that there were so many applications that it was an inefficient use of resources. Nevertheless, this lack of communication was a stressful issue for many prisoners.

6.2 Physical healthcare

NMoC includes the Early Days in Custody (EDIC) Pathway, the Planned Care Pathway and the Unscheduled Care Pathway. The EDIC focus resulted in initiatives such as an EDIC co-ordinator, a Friday GP mood review clinic and daily frailty clinic for those identified as being at risk upon arrival. The QOF (Quality and Outcomes Framework) used by the NHS to indicate the overall achievement in GP and prison healthcare practices was used this year. This showed a very impressive upward trend from a score of 58% in September 2023 to 97.43% in March 2024.

There was a daily multi-disciplinary meeting to discuss every man who came into the prison the previous day. A plan was determined if required and, as all disciplines were represented, there was ownership of care decisions. The Board consider it to be an impressive and thorough approach.

AAA (abdominal aortic aneurism) screening for older prisoners took place in March 2024.

Release and transfer staff supported numerous complex patients through the gate and on release from prison including on the day of release from custody by travelling together to appointments.

'Did not Attends' continued to be at a low level.

The pharmacy technician hours were extended Monday to Saturday from 8am-5.30pm to 8am-8.30pm. In-possession medicines were increased. A local policy targeted the significantly high numbers of hypnotic/sleep medication issued to patients on arrival. By December 2023, there was a 77% decrease in sleep medication prescribing. Patients were given sleep hygiene advice. Concealing and trading of medication was an issue. Adequate officer presence at the hatch was not always provided and pharmacy reported problems completing weekly spot checks due to this. Minor ailment provision was set up in June 2023 and technicians provided treatment for a range of minor ailments, avoiding the need to wait for a GP appointment. Provision of prescriptions for planned releases were rolled out last year. Patients released on a Friday were issued with a prescription to cover them until their outside appointment. The issuing on release of Naloxone, a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose, was in place throughout the year and was embedded in the start of NMoC in August. Patients with a history of opiate use were given Naloxone and shown how to use it.

6.3 Mental health

In the last two months there was an improvement in providing mental health assessment and input. Due to staff sickness and unfilled posts, there had been a decrease in the number of patients seen. Since the introduction of NMoC there was an improvement in the five-day standard for assessing patients and an increase in referrals to the Unscheduled Care Mental Health Pathway, with those individuals being seen within 24 hours of referral.

Mental health professionals visited CSU prisoners and attended Good Order or Discipline reviews where they also provided mental health advice and support.

The availability of specialist mental healthcare beds was an issue. Men who were assessed as needing outside mental health provision remained in Pentonville awaiting places. There were 55 transfers out during the year with an average waiting time of 63 days. 18 transfers (33%) were concluded within a 28-day period in accordance with national guidance. Thus, very unwell men remained in the prison and men remained on normal location or in the CSU awaiting a place in the inpatients unit.

The Neurodiverse Unit (NDU), housing 50 men on a self-contained landing, continued to function well, and prisoners considered themselves to be very fortunate to be there. It managed the neurodiverse prisoners who found it difficult to cope with life on normal location. The opening of the unit also had a beneficial effect on the whole prison. Prisoners who could be very disruptive were better managed on the unit, giving the staff on normal location more time to run the regime without interruption.



The sensory room in the NDU

There were numerous therapy sessions in the Wellbeing Centre for those identified as having a need, led by psychologists and occupational health practitioners who also visited the inpatients unit. VPs were able to access the centre for the first time this year which was a real step forward in broadening their regime. It continued to be an underused resource due to unreliable unlocking and escorting.

6.4 Social care

Patients were initially triaged by one of the in-house Social Care assistants and where appropriate, an onward referral to the Islington Adult Social Care Team was made for a Care Act assessment. During the reporting year, three Occupational Therapist and three Care Act assessments were carried out.

Peer supporters, or buddies, were arranged by the Equalities team after referrals were made to them. The system appeared to be mutually beneficial. There were no palliative or end of life care patients.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

The prison has settled into a post-Covid-19 regime that offers most prisoners SWA and access to work or education that is limited to a half day rather than full time. If prisoners cannot, or do not wish to, take part in these formal activities, then they spent around 22 hours a day locked in their cells, only emerging for exercise, food, showers, wing recreation (including table football, pool and ping pong) and admin tasks. These five items constitute typical SWA. The Board considers that 22 out of 24 hours a day is an unacceptably long time to be locked away, reduces the opportunities for rehabilitation, is inhumane, and amounts to the warehousing of a significant proportion of Pentonville's population.



Wing recreation included pool

In addition, the type of activity prisoners have access to will usually depend on the wing that they live on. Relevant considerations include health needs, non-associations and the need to separate gangs. This is a constraint on the variety of activities that the prison can offer each prisoner, which are described in more detail in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2. In the reporting period there have been times where the regime has been restricted due to staff shortages. This appears to be more likely during predictable holiday periods when more staff take leave at the same time.

The changes from the pre-Covid regime mean that prisoners are not out of their cells for as long as before, where unstructured association on wings was the norm. The Board considers this change to be a seriously retrograde development that needs to be addressed.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Prisoners on Pentonville's drug-free wing, which has 60 places, earn privileges through work, voluntary drug testing and a behaviour compact.

New arrivals in Pentonville were seen by the Substance Misuse Team during induction to more quickly reach men in need of help.

Peer supporters were trained to build support on wings where there was evidence of increased use of spice. The team held more wing surgeries about spice and fentanyl, and it was a focus of harm reduction work. Recovery workers developed a substance use, low mood and suicidal thoughts handout. When more illicit alcohol appeared on the wings prison staff were trained to spot signs and effects.

Group work included: weekly sessions on the NDU; a group on better communication for prisoners and their families; and a Black History Month workshop and celebration event. A book club was started on the detox wing.

Continuity of care continued to improve through a partnership with PNAP (probation service in the community) and regular meetings with community teams to ensure streamlining of the referral process and extra support for prisoners being released. A new releases group also helped.

More prisoners were released this year with less than 24 hours' notice after sentencing or acquittal. The team collaborated with pharmacy colleagues to provide them with a bridging prescription for essential medication. This should also have benefited those doing 14 day recalls or some of the prisoners getting days off their sentence. The whole team was given in-depth Naloxone training to aid with instructing the men.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The education programme in Pentonville is a great resource but remained underused. Despite momentum generated last year from an initiative to raise awareness of the importance of getting prisoners unlocked on time and to education/activities, late unlocking by wing staff remained a frustration for tutors and valuable teaching time was lost. In late March, attendance was approximately 55% from an allocation of 75%. While there were places for 200 prisoners each morning and afternoon, four out of 12 attending a class was common.

A new activities timetable was launched in December, along with bright and thoughtfully designed activities application forms (including separate ones for VPs) and a comprehensive document setting out local prisoners' pay scales.

The timetable was designed to allow more prisoners to engage with the opportunities on offer which are mostly on a part-time basis. Full-time exceptions include the Redemption Roasters barista course and working in the main kitchen. The certificated courses offered included English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), maths, English, criminology, the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award, radio production and first aid.

The library worked hard to facilitate more regular access across the prison (including for VPs living on the induction wing), and to maintain the diversity and high standards of the wider offerings. For example, the library provided space for the Prisoner Advice Service, workshops with writer in residence Caroline 'Cass' Green, a dedicated reading group for prisoners on the NDU, and 'Urban Lawyers' business events. A new collaboration with the Museum of London started this year. The project entitled "Imagining London in 2050" will give many prisoners the chance to contribute short stories, personal stories and artwork.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Vocational training included industrial cleaning, food hygiene, painting and decorating, textiles, printing, recycling, barbering and the Construction Skills

Certification Scheme card qualification. The Employment Hub, funded by New Futures Network, is in its second year of operation. When requested, it arranged ID and assisted in opening bank accounts for prisoners but its ability to do so was hampered by staff sickness for most of the reporting year. All prisoners with 12 months or less to serve were sent an employment assessment form. If completed, the Hub could identify what was appropriate for them in terms of upskilling (e.g. CV writing and handling disclosure letters) or making suitable employment links.

Redemption Roasters continued to run its barista courses. Prisoners from the textiles workshop cut and sewed bedding and boxer shorts for the prison estate and produced professional quality printed merchandise for HMPPS. Liberty Kitchen has rebuilt its enterprise to a near pre-pandemic position. Over 120 participants have received training, developed catering expertise, and gained enterprise qualifications, as well as life and personal skills. Approximately one third of the prisoners taking part have, upon release, been employed at a range of events and street food markets.

Gym. PE Instructors (PEIs) continued to deliver valued sessions, enhanced by the reopening of the sports hall. This was the only space in the prison where ballgames were permitted and was used particularly by the cohort of prisoners working with the Twinning Project who passed the accredited Football Association level one coaching course. There were seven PEIs, two newly joined this year (including the first female instructor at Pentonville). Once all are qualified, they can start to offer specialist courses such as weightlifting to prisoners.

No Release on Temporary Licence happened this year.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Offender Management Unit (OMU). In the past two annual reports the Board has been critical of the OMU. For the second year in a row, 16% of all IMB applications were about the services that the OMU provides to prisoners. However, behind this statistic lies a recent increase in prisoners' concerns. Whilst the number of applications decreased progressively through the reporting year (with only four in the whole of December), from the beginning of 2024 they started to rise again. This increase coincided with the additional demands that have been placed on the OMU because of a flurry of government-imposed measures taken to manage the overcrowding in prisons (described in paragraph 7.5). The additional work in identifying prisoners for relocation to other prisons, early release and changes to rules on home detention curfews all placed extra work on an already fragile team without extra resource being provided. Despite strong management that has resolved many of the staff shortages and coped with the pressure of a considerable training load, this extra burden impacted the routine service that the OMU could deliver. The Board believes that HMPPS should recognise these extra pressures on this department, and resource it accordingly.

A basic level of service was delivered by the OMU over the reporting year. Wing-based clinics where prisoners could discuss their concerns face-to face with a member of the OMU staff were introduced in the last reporting year but were not maintained. This was a disappointment, and the Board would encourage the prison to re-establish these clinics.

Prisoners on Sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). An IPP sentence is recognised as an unjust sentence. When the government rejected the Justice Committee's recommendation for resentencing, the Board thought that there might be practical issues – beyond the frustration or bitterness of IPP prisoners - where the IMB's monitoring, and publicity remit could assist.

The findings from Board members' interviews with IPPs, the conclusion that the IPPs needed a champion, and the prison's positive response to the Board's involvement are described in Annex B.

Legal Visits. Most legal visits are now by video call in dedicated private rooms, using the Official Prison Visits system. Unfortunately, these were the same rooms that were used for in-person legal visits previously, and as video calls became the norm, these rooms could no longer accommodate the in-person requirement. The prison has therefore returned to the temporary Covid-19 arrangement (implemented to allow social distancing) of using the social visits hall for in-person visits in the mornings, resulting in a loss of confidentiality. The prison has imposed a maximum of 17 visits in the hall to increase separation between parties, and a small number of

private rooms are available where things like video footage need to be viewed. Despite this mitigation, the Board still has a concern about confidentiality given the potential to overhear conversations.

The booking schedule for legal visits is well managed and clear, with up to 25 visits per day, and legal representatives have found them easy to arrange. There have been some problems with legal representatives booking visits and then not attending, which causes much frustration to prisoners and the prison staff.

Young Adults. At the end of the reporting year over 100 prisoners were aged 18-25. Several bespoke opportunities were run again to support these prisoners, including:

- Time4Change, a programme which aimed to challenge the perceptions of young men who had grown up in and around gangs and crime and helped improve their chances of education or lawful employment upon release. The programme continues to be a particularly impressive initiative and on its latest course has been able to accommodate more prisoners than ever before from three different wings – gang conflict notwithstanding.
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award, adapted for young people in custody.

Despite these successes, with so few dedicated facilities the Board remains concerned that young adults continue to be held in Pentonville at all.

7.4 Family contact

Social visits. Bookings for social visits were made by telephone to a central booking number, or by email to the prison for a limited number of wings. There continued to be long waits for visitors to get an answer on the telephone service, and communication about information on things like dress-code and ID documentation requirements is not always clear. The implementation of the planned online booking service is long overdue and would address these issues. The complexities of safely de-conflicting different groups of prisoners has challenged HMPPS in its development; its introduction would remove a great deal of the stress currently experienced by families and friends.

Social visits are held in two one-hour sessions in the afternoons, and the maximum number of visitors in the hall has increased slightly to 38. There is a small play area for children that is supervised by staff from Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT, the contractor responsible for managing visits). The support for this facility is fragile, and occasionally PACT have been unable to provide the necessary staff to open it. Extended family-day visits are held regularly. In line with the Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties Policy Framework, they are no longer limited to enhanced prisoners; however, each application is considered on a case-by-case basis by prison management to avoid disruptive behaviour.

PACT have enhanced the range of food and drink offered at the snack bar this year. Visitors purchased tokens before entering the visits hall, but these could only be bought with cash. A card payment system would improve this arrangement.

Video visits. Social video calls could be booked using the *Phone Hub* system. They were free, and very popular. Booking was straightforward, but there have been occasions where prisoners have not been unlocked to attend a call.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Three-quarters of prisoners over the reporting year were unsentenced and of those 63% were on remand. As in the previous year, prisoners on remand for long periods had insufficient support on leaving prison particularly when released immediately from court. Without release plans, rehabilitation is less likely to be effective. Many agencies were understaffed and some contracts prevented them from working with high risk or remanded prisoners, so the number of prisoners they could support was limited. Unlocking by prison officers continued to be an obstacle to accessing the agencies which was frustrating for prisoners and staff alike. Since the government's End of Custody Supervised Licence (ECSL) scheme was implemented allowing release of prisoners up to 60 days before their conditional release date, there had been a rise in prisoners being released homeless. This was due to the immediate nature of releases under the scheme that left support agencies little time to complete vital post-custody support plans. Challenges during this time were the large proportion of remands, not knowing release dates for many and prisoners being transferred out to other establishments due to prison population pressures. Below is a selection of agencies which provided resettlement support:

- From April to December Only Connect provided Through the Gate support three to six months prior to release to help prisoners into education, training and employment. They delivered four courses reaching 16 participants. However, they worked only with sentenced prisoners and left Pentonville in December 2023 due to the high proportion of remand prisoners.
- St Mungo's, the housing charity, worked with 334 referrals and 191 releases. Of those released, 166 were supported into some form of housing, a rate of 87%. At the end of the reporting year, St Mungo's were still not contracted to work with remand prisoners. Therefore, the vast majority at Pentonville had received no support from the agency since 2021.
- From December 2023 Bounce Back Employment Services worked closely with the Pentonville Prison Employment Lead to provide opportunities and choices for prisoners prior to their release. They delivered a pilot of a City & Guilds assured course 'PowerUp' to seven prisoners and had an active caseload of 14. Two were supported in the community and one started a paid job within six weeks of release. Bounce Back also worked closely with Phoenix Futures to identify prisoners who were returning to the boroughs of Southwark or Tower Hamlets, as they delivered an Education, Training and Employment (ETE) service for those engaged with substance use providers.
- Catch22's Personal Wellbeing and Dependency & Recovery Services had 13 referrals - two withdrew, one completed and 10 were ongoing. Several were referred to Catch22's Finance, Benefit & Debt service that was available upon release. Catch22 allocated Prison Leads to complete initial assessments and pre-release interventions in person, offered a meet at the gate service, and continued support into the community.
- Job Centre Plus (JCP) coaches engaged with 1,350 remand and sentenced prisoners to provide benefit, employment advice and guidance. Employment support for prisoners nearing release included collaboration with wider JCP colleagues and external partners including A Fairer Chance. JCP Prison Worker Coaches (PWCs) utilised the Employment Hub to deliver interactive benefit sessions for prisoners, providing information on Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The latter session, facilitated by a

disability employment adviser, provided awareness of the support available through the Job Centre network on release. PWCs also introduced employment advisers to the Employment Hub, a package of support which was scheduled to roll out further from April 2024. The community engagement team provided wrap around support with local services for young men with gang affiliations on release. Obstacles to effectiveness included PWCs receiving many enquiries very close to release date which were not shown as release dates when reviewing JCP's weekly checks. This meant that they received Job Centre support but not the normal level of move-on support.

- The Employment Hub completed 34 job and training applications, with 14 provisional job offers made. It applied for 10 bank accounts and 42 birth certificates for prisoners. This was without a current full-time ID and Banking Administrator in post due to sickness. The Hub held eight employer events over this period with employers from companies such as Iceland and Greene King. The Hub held training and information sessions on topics such as benefits, debt management, accessing probation, disclosure and introduction to hospitality. Career information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision was understaffed so the Prison Employment Lead helped to create 28 CVs for job-ready candidates. Housing was a challenge, but two prisoners secured employment despite being homeless on release. Efforts were made to promote the Employment Hub throughout the establishment with regular information on the wings, in-cell TV and the *Voice of the Ville* prison magazine.
- The Pre-release Team completed Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST) 2 within the first five working days of a prisoner arriving in custody. This was completed once the BCST 1 was completed by the Prison Offender Manager or first night centre staff.

The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14
Total number of visits to the establishment	512

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	59	47
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	20	13
C	Equality	20	11
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	58	55
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	115	50
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	38	38
F	Food and kitchens	16	21
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	143	157
H1	Property within the establishment	70	103
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	64	81
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	14	15
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	141	146
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	66	70
K	Transfers	7	25
L	Miscellaneous	44	52
	Total number of applications	875	884

Annex A

Service providers

- Maintenance: Gov Facility Services Ltd (GFSL). Pest control is sub-contracted to Rentokil
- Education: Novus
- Escort contractor: Serco
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Practice Plus Group
- Optometry: The Prison Opticians Company Ltd
- Dental services: Smile Dental
- Podiatry and physiotherapy were sub-contracted from Premier
- Mental health: Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust coordinates the work of Practice Plus primary mental health nurses, with its own secondary mental health, inpatient and day care services.
- Substance misuse programme: Building Futures
- Gym qualifications: Active IQ
- Visitors' centre: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
- Resettlement support:
 - Only Connect
 - Bounce Back
 - Standout
 - St Mungo's
 - Catch 22
 - Job Centre Plus

Annex B

Prisoners on Sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) in Pentonville & the IMB

A sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) is recognised as an unjust sentence. After the government rejected the Justice Select Committee's recommendation for resentencing, the IMB wrote to the IPP prisoners saying the Board would like to talk to them about their experience in Pentonville. Board members interviewed 12 prisoners. Most had been out on licence multiple times for periods of months; two had been out for years. Some were recalled for not complying with licence conditions such as being out of touch or taking drugs; two for further offences and their short sentences would expire before the parole process. One man, not released, had already served two periods of pre-release leave from a Cat D prison before transferring to Pentonville when charged with historic offences.

Despair was to be expected from the IPPs; it seemed overwhelming. More unexpected was their reluctance to make a fuss and draw attention to themselves.

Their state of mind is illustrated in the following observations:

- 'No reward for good behaviour. Bad behaviour gets attention, programmes, what they want. IPPs have to have good behaviour and don't get attention.'
- 'Hopelessness and continuous anxiety - a doom loop.'
- 'Can't tell anyone here in case it's a negative on your file. Can't make a complaint.'
- 'Agony. Doesn't bear thinking about. Feel helpless. Have no direction in Pentonville. Locked up 23 hours a day.'
- 'Risk on the inside is despair. What have I got to live for?'
- 'Some IPPs are well known to staff; others are invisible – 'No one checks in with us.' 'No respectful conversations with any officer at my door.'
- 'Set up to fail. Most people are allowed to have a "low" day, but if you are on licence, you are then accused of not engaging.'

IPPs needed a champion

The IMB suggested that Pentonville should have a named member of staff, with empathy and significant experience, to whom the IPP prisoners could turn for support and who would develop a holistic awareness of IPP needs in Pentonville. The co-ordinator would have an overview of the IPP population in Pentonville.

- Contact – checking in with individual IPP prisoners regularly.
- Employment – fighting for them to get jobs. 'No one will give me a job when they see my record.' IPPs needed to be occupied and wanted to work. Also, they needed money. Some had no family contacts left to ask. 'I don't want to ask my family anyway: my self-esteem is bad enough already.'
- Holistic view of wellbeing starting with identifying IPP prisoners in reception. There was no priority for healthcare despite their safety risk. Health had been undermined by long-term effects of prison diet e.g. diabetes. Some wanted regular, voluntary drug tests to build up evidence for parole.

- Family ties – work with PACT to explore creative ways to rebuild fragile ties. For example, family visits on a small scale geared to teenage children. Some with an elderly parent perceived themselves as a ‘carer’.
- Encourage Pentonville to make use of IPP experience – expand their involvement in trusted roles, including volunteering to support new prisoners.

Prisoner offender managers and community offender managers

The IMB cannot monitor the work of the National Probation Service. IPP prisoners see themselves as constantly on the back foot in any sort of sentence plan or release plan. Men with a release date get priority. The Board recorded the following statements:

- ‘If you have a sentence plan, usually can’t do what’s on it!’, ‘We should be given priority for courses and assessments.’ Churning round prisons with no joined-up thinking on parole board expectations was part of it.
- Some hadn’t heard from a POM or COM for a long time, or not at all in Pentonville.
- ‘Waiting 6 months for a psychologist. Don’t give me one who wasn’t born when I was sentenced.’
- ‘I wanted to do anger-management but just got an in-cell pack.’
- ‘I’m not going to engage with the Parole Board because I’ve got no hope of getting out anyway.’
- Probation officers were seen as too quick to recall and experience of release plans was negative e.g. placed in hostels with drug users.

Pentonville’s response

The Governor welcomed the IMB’s proposals, and a Custodial Manager took on the challenge of co-ordinator, in addition to his residential duties. He convenes a monthly meeting of IPP prisoners and Lifers, who have similar concerns, in the library.

Practical progress includes:

- Most are in employment; wing staff were asked to give them priority in allocating jobs. Instructions were recorded in the minutes, sent to the prisoners, and in a notice to senior officers.
- Two Senior Probation Officers attend the monthly meeting.
- A family visit day specifically for this group is being organised.
- Liberty Kitchen is organising cookery classes and the men will cater for family.
- Mentoring young men on the Time4Change programme.
- After the formal meeting the men can mingle over tea and choose library books. While the population of IPPs fluctuates, participation is high. The meetings offer the men attention and hope and give them agency in pressing for practical change.



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