



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Channings Wood

**For reporting year
1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Channings Wood is a category C training and resettlement prison for adult men, with an operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) of 746¹. The prison operates a split site regime across all areas for the two groups of prisoners it holds: 'Mains' prisoners and vulnerable prisoners (VPs), which includes prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCoSOs).

The prison opened in 1974 on the extensive site of a former Ministry of Defence base and is in a rural area of south Devon near Newton Abbot. The site is bounded by a high fence and there are several public footpaths around the perimeter. Internal fences separate the two prisoner groups and control prisoners' movement on the site. There are eight permanent living blocks (LBs), with one (LB7) comprised of rapid deployment cells. There are also workshops, a kitchen, a care and separation unit (CSU, more commonly known as the segregation unit), a health centre, a well-equipped gym and sports hall, a multifaith place of worship and a separate chapel, plus greenhouses and buildings housing other services. All buildings are either single storey or two storeys.

The eight LBs are split between Mains prisoners (LB3, 4, 6 and 8) and VPs (LB1, 2, 5 and 7), with LB3, LB6 and LB7 housing enhanced status prisoners. (The prison's incentive scheme comprises three levels, of which 'enhanced' is the highest and earns the prisoner extra privileges.) New receptions are placed in LB2 and LB8. Five of the LBs have a central entrance area, off which there are offices, classrooms, a servery and two association rooms. Cells in these blocks are on four corridors on each wing, two on each floor, arranged at right angles to each other. Most blocks have single cells with a toilet and communal showers, while LB8 has double cells with ensuite showers. Four LBs have been equipped with bunk beds for dual occupancy by new arrivals. Due to overcrowding and the increase in the operational capacity to 746, 65 single cells have been adapted for dual occupancy.

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

It was with much sadness that the Board learned of the sudden and untimely death of the Deputy Governor in January 2024. His support for and cooperation with the Board's work was always appreciated. When dealing with the loss of a close colleague, the resilience of the senior management team, at such a trying time, was very evident.

3.1 Main findings

The closure of HMP Dartmoor has had a major impact of all aspects of the regime at Channings Wood. This began in January 2024, with the transfer of all Mains prisoners from LB2 to prepare it for occupation by VPs from mid-February. By early August, the last Dartmoor prisoner had arrived (a total of 264 in total), with the bulk arriving between March and May. As well as the high churn (turnover) of prisoners over a relatively short period, the population balance changed significantly, from 60% Main and 40% VP, to 55% VP and 45% Main. Although managers deserve much credit for successfully conducting the mechanics of receptions and transfers, the disruptive effects have taken far longer to deal with. Physical changes to the estate, a significant redistribution of work roles and other activities (a source of discontent with both cohorts) and pressure on activities hub staff, careers information, advice and guidance staff (CIAG), offender management unit (OMU) programmes and resettlement has been considerable. The new regime continues to bed in, assisted in part by additional staff from Dartmoor, but, in the Board's view, it has been a very challenging period for all concerned.

Safety

- Although a reduction in the number of self-harm incidents was noted in each month of the second half of the reporting period, over the full year, the total is very similar to the previous reporting period. While the number of incidents has not fallen significantly, there is a downward trend, due to the efforts of staff. The number of prisoners arriving on open assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide), partly due to continued population pressures, is a concern.
- Management data (low levels of confirmed conveyance, low positive mandatory drug tests rates and low impact in relation to drug finds and prisoners reported as being under the influence) indicates that measures to detect illicit substances are effective. When drugs do evade detection, though, the risk to safety is significant.
- Assaults have declined steadily over the reporting period. A total of 87% of prisoners spoken to during the IMB Board's survey said they felt safe all or most of the time.
- There were very few serious incidents and one death in custody, which occurred post release.

Fair and humane treatment

- The inability of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to deal with the repairs backlog (particularly roofing and flooring) continues to adversely affect decency, access to purposeful activity and overall operational effectiveness. Managers at local level cannot deal with this.
- Missing property, mostly when it does not accompany a prisoner on transfer, is a running sore, which HMPPS seems incapable of treating.
- Coping with a prisoner with challenging behaviour who is on a long-running 'dirty protest' (where a prisoner has chosen to defecate or urinate in a cell without using the facilities provided) in the CSU requires a solution other than managing

the situation or sharing the burden with other establishments to provide staff with some respite.

Health and wellbeing

- Although overall waiting times for healthcare appointments have improved, those for opticians and psychologists are still too long.
- While the Board has not had to intervene this year, we are seriously concerned about the prison's ability to adequately meeting the needs of an expanding ageing population. There is only so much that the local initiatives noted by the Board can achieve while there is still no strategy in place at national level.

Progression and resettlement

- Prisoners serving imprisonment for public protection sentences (IPP, which was abolished 12 years ago and considered inhumane by the Board) experience hopelessness, frustration and, for many, poor mental health. They face great difficulty progressing towards release and a re-sentencing exercise remains vital.
- In a training and resettlement prison, purposeful activity is essential to progression and to help reduce reoffending. It is regrettable that instructor shortages sometimes limit capacity, but it is unacceptable that delivery efforts by staff are more often undermined by ageing infrastructure that is prone to failure.
- A realistic and achievable sentence plan should be how prisoners navigate their way to release. The persistent offender assessment system (OASys) backlog should be avoidable.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The abolished and discredited IPP sentence is inhumane and unfairly disadvantages those prisoners still serving such a sentence. When does the Minister plan to revisit the proposed resentencing exercise previously recommended by the Justice Select Committee? If he will not, can he explain why?
- The inability to conduct timely repairs to roofing, heating systems and work-related equipment continues to undermine operational effectiveness and limit capacity in purposeful activity. As in our previous report, the Board, again, asks why has this situation been allowed to drag on for so long and when will it be resolved?
- Year after year, we have been told that the ageing population strategy is coming soon. As in our previous report, the Board asks, again, when will it arrive and what improvements will it bring to the living conditions and care needs of elderly prisoners?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- In September 2022, the Prison Service implemented a new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, with the aim of addressing the main problems regularly identified by IMBs. Two years later, there is little to no evidence that the framework has made any difference to the safe recording, storage and movement of prisoners' property. As in our previous report, the Board asks, again, when

HMPPS will admit that the current system is broken and invest in much-needed resolutions, including a national digital tracking system²?

- Why is there, apparently, no alternative solution, other than long-term and indefinite segregation, to manage prisoners who refuse to end their 'dirty protest'?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- What more can the Governor do to further limit both the longstanding problem and underlying causes of self-harm where, despite a downward trend, levels remain a concern?
- Although only Government legislation can offer hope to those prisoners still serving an IPP sentence, given their unique situation, what measures can the Governor take to improve conditions for them at HMP Channings Wood?

3.3 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister The Board has noted its concerns over the provision of adequate care for an increasingly ageing population. For those with health and/or mobility conditions, results within a prison environment lean towards less favourable outcomes. The much trailed and delayed older offenders or ageing population strategy is still awaited. When will it be published and what assurances can the Minister provide that the strategy will be properly resourced to ensure adequate provision for older prisoners across the prison estate?	<p>On 18 March 2024, the Minister stated that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) planned to publish the ageing population strategy later that calendar year (2024). It would set out how the provision for older prisoners would be reformed, including the prison estate, the prison regime, health and care services, and their preparation for release and resettlement.</p> <p>The Minister stated that the expansion project at HMP Channings Wood would include four ground-floor accessible cells in each of the two new living blocks, as well as 12 cells for those with lower mobility. For the needs of an ageing population, there would also be accessible toilet facilities, workshops and classrooms.</p>	<p>The ageing population strategy has still not been published.</p> <p>The expansion project has now begun.</p>

² The Board does not mean the Person Escort Record.

<p>To the Minister</p> <p>The Board has observed the steady and detrimental impact of acute population pressures across a range of prison services. The planned expansion at Channings Wood is part of the national programme intended to address this. Can the Minister assure the Board that the provision of new infrastructure will not be at the expense of maintaining the current and ageing estate? The annual report has noted the excessive time taken to carry out some repairs to key buildings and equipment. This adversely affects not just living conditions for prisoners but also access to many of the activities that help prepare them for release. Over the next few years, will an equal priority be given to maintaining the current old estate as to funding the new?</p>	<p>The Minister stated that the expansion programme and the ability to maintain existing facilities are separate, although he added that <i>'MoJ Property Services is committed to ensuring that the existing accommodation is the best it can be whilst working with budgetary constraints.'</i> In addition, tenders would be awarded for roof repairs and showers for work to be carried out in financial year 2024-2025.</p>	<p>As of August 2024, roof repair work had still not begun.</p>
<p>To the Prison Service</p> <p>For many years, the Board has reported on the apparent inability of the Prison Service to move prisoners' property from one prison to another without loss. This is consistently the single biggest issue that prisoners bring to the Board's attention. It is an ongoing source of frustration, takes an inordinate amount of staff time to investigate (let alone resolve) and</p>	<p>The Board received a response: 'Staff locally make every effort to contact the sending prison at the earliest opportunity to rectify these issues. However, when they are not able to be resolved, prisoners are encouraged to submit complaints in order that the issue is formally recorded and the correct process for addressing the issue can be followed.'</p>	<p>No progress to date.</p>

represents an avoidable expense in compensation paid. In the Board's opinion, the implementation of Prisoners' Property Policy Framework has done nothing to improve the situation. What does the Prison Service intend to do next to try to resolve this longstanding failure?	This describes remedial action, not preventative.	
To the Governor After a welcome and sustained downward trend in many safety indicators, the Board has noted an increase in serious assaults, the number of prisoners self-isolating and above average levels of self-harm. Given the belief that the main underlying cause is the availability of drugs, what further measures can be taken to intercept them? Are there further technological solutions which would assist if they were made available at Channings Wood?	A geo fence virtual perimeter ³ is in place to detect, alert and track drones [which are used to drop illicit items into the prison grounds]. The Governor would also welcome a radio frequency jamming system.	Costs have so far prevented the provision of such a system.
To the Governor As one manager told the Board in 2021: <i>'You can't achieve OMiC [offender management in custody] if you can't achieve key work.'</i> Last year, HM Inspectorate of Prisons stated: <i>'The absence of a functioning key worker scheme exacerbated the problems that prisoners told us they faced in getting things done.'</i> For several reasons (and	Staff shortages had limited the extension of key work provision to the wider population from the risk-managed priority list.	From June 2024, key work was extended to the wider population, but the full OMiC delivery model is not yet being achieved. The arrival of staff from HMP Dartmoor has allowed more key work sessions to be delivered, as Dartmoor staff backfilled other roles. It is expected that, at some point, Dartmoor staff will also deliver key work,

³ A virtual geographic boundary that enables software to trigger a response when a mobile device enters or leaves a particular area.

even under the delivery to priority groups only model), key work is not being achieved. Can the Governor tell the Board when he plans to return to full key work delivery and how he hopes to achieve this?		enabling targets to be met.
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Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

There have been 972 receptions this reporting period, of which 264 were from HMP Dartmoor. Members routinely (but irregularly) monitor the reception process and generally observe that new arrivals are treated well and staff and orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) are seen to treat prisoners with respect, especially the elderly and vulnerable.

Healthcare staff see prisoners on arrival and Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) are made available. Reception staff try to limit issues that late arrival times might cause for prisoners, beginning the preparatory administrative work as soon as they can confirm the details of the prisoners on the vehicle. As has been noted in previous reports, late arrivals on a Friday can result in prisoners not receiving access to their phone PIN account (which allows prisoners to make phone calls) until the following Monday. Where possible, the business hub brings forward the accounts of those due to arrive on a Friday so that they have access to the phone over the weekend. If this cannot be done, staff try to mitigate the effects by offering prisoners a call on the office phone. Anecdotally, though, this remains the main cause of prisoner dissatisfaction.

Volumetric control of property is often exceeded, with prisoners arriving with more property than permitted. This leads to delays in processing property while it is checked and recorded manually, which can be a source of inaccuracies on property cards (which lists a prisoner's personal items). Longer-detained prisoners tend to have amassed possessions over time, and because lost property on transfer is a major ongoing concern, prisoners try to bring as much of it with them as possible. If lack of space on the vehicle precludes this, there is a risk that property will not follow on within the 28-day timeframe set out in the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework.

Where possible, the Board tries to speak to new arrivals as part of their induction process about the role of the IMB. This is not always possible, due either to members being unavailable or the inability of wing staff to facilitate this. As a result, the Board cannot be confident that every new arrival is briefed, although all receive an information sheet from the Board's clerk and one is also included in their induction handbook. Prisoners spoken to by members mostly report favourably on their experience of reception. The Board notes that, in its own survey in June 2024, 92% of prisoners on the Mains induction wing said they felt safe all or most of the time. However, on the VP induction wing, this fell to 81%.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Members regularly review ACCT documentation and find that that, in general, it is well managed by multi-disciplinary teams, with good record keeping, reviews and prisoner participation. ACCTs are opened due to threats of, or actual, self-harm and, of these, approximately 40% are the result of suicidal thoughts or threats of suicide. This reporting year, the average number of open ACCTs was 26 per month, which was very similar to last year's figures. The Board remains concerned by the added risk posed by prisoner receptions who arrive on open ACCTs, which is, on average, five a month. While this may be driven by population pressures, the Board considers that it can only heighten the risk of self-harm at a very stressful time for prisoners.

Although a reduction in the number of self-harm incidents was noted in each month of the second half of the reporting period, over the full year the total is very similar to the previous reporting period. In the 11 months for which data is available, there were 533 reported self-harm incidents, with numbers fluctuating, from a high of 72 in October 2023 to a low of 26 in February 2024. Roughly 20% of self-harm incidents are by repeat self-harmers. Board members' regular visits to self-isolating prisoners enable them to monitor the suitable levels of care and intervention received from staff. The Resettlement and Care for Older Ex Offenders and Prisoners (RECOOP)-led peer support programme, referenced in the last report, which promotes early risk identification and intervention, has received positive external evaluation of its impact in the prison.

There has been a single death in custody over the year, which occurred in September 2023, ten days after the prisoner's release, and was self-inflicted. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) report found that both prison and probation staff did all they could to manage the risks, noting that the substance misuse service at Channings Wood handed over the prisoner's care to the community provider effectively, and ensured that he had continuity of care on his release.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The Board's survey of prisoners conducted, in June 2024, found that the large majority of prisoners (87%) felt safe most or all of the time. The survey indicated that Mains prisoners were significantly more likely than VPs to say that they felt safe. Prison records reflect these views. For example, that same month, 70% self-harm incidents occurred in VP living blocks. Nevertheless, records also show that prisoner assaults are far more likely to occur in Mains living blocks than in VP areas, although the induction block for VP experiences many more prisoner-on-prisoner assaults than other VP units. At times of greatest risk (such as movements between living blocks and places of work), drone surveillance is carried out to act as a deterrent and to record evidence in case of an incident.

In the months for which data is available, there were 141 reported assaults, of which the vast majority (80%) were prisoner on prisoner. There is a noticeable decline in the number of assaults reported over time, from 27 in October 2023 to five in June 2024, with fewer assaults on staff. None was reported in May and June. Debt issues continue to dominate when prisoner violence is recorded. Prison staff report that only three prisoner-on-prisoner assaults were recorded as serious. There was one serious assault on a member of staff and, on average, one member of staff is injured each month, which is down on the previous year. The downward trend in assaults in the second half of the reporting period is encouraging.

IMB members meet self-isolators and the staff monitoring them on a weekly basis and are generally positive when reporting their observations. Prisoners offer a range of reasons for isolating, including debt (in August 2024, the security department issued a bulleting on extortion, citing an increase in intelligence reporting across the prison), personal safety and avoidance of problems with others as they near the end of their sentence or await transfer.

4.4 Use of force

Over the reporting period, the average number of incidents involving force was 24 per month, ranging from a peak of 40 in January to low of five in July. Board members observe incident debriefs, where possible, and sample the monthly use of force meetings, where data is analysed, body worn video camera footage (available for over

80% of incidents) is reviewed, follow-up actions considered and lessons identified. Prison managers have access to good data on the use of force, which is used effectively for tracking and intervention purposes. There was no use of batons (which have been drawn on four occasions in 12 months) but pelargonic acid vanillyl amide (PAVA) incapacitant spray was used twice. Almost all (97%) incidents are recorded as spontaneous, with only five planned uses of force during the reporting year. A prisoner's refusal to return to their cell is most often cited when force is used.

While prisoners aged 26-35 years were involved in most incidents, the 18-25 age group was over-represented by percentage of population, as were prisoners recorded as neurodivergent. However, members also reported positively on staff responses to neurodiverse prisoners, when intervention has been judged necessary. Almost all prisoners involved attend debrief meetings following the use of force.

There have been no serious incidents attended by members since October 2023. On the two occasions when the Board was alerted, the incidents were resolved before members could respond. There has not been any incident during the reporting period that led to the deployment of the National Tactical Response Group (a team trained to intervene in dangerous, high-risk situations).

4.5 Preventing illicit items

All new arrivals are scanned for illicit items (drugs, phones, weapons) using X-ray body scanner equipment, except when this might compromise decency. About 10% of these scans are positive. Prisoners found to have secreted items are segregated until the items have been removed. HMPPS's policy on X-ray body scanners states that such use should be intelligence or threat driven. The Governor considers that the risk of drugs coming in from other establishments on transfer constitutes a clear threat and related intelligence is reviewed monthly.

Random checks are carried out on visitors by drug-detection dogs before entering the visits' hall. Over the last year, there have been ten positive results, but it is of concern that psychoactive substance (PS or Spice) variants are continually modified, which can reduce the effectiveness of the sniffer dogs. All prisoners are given a rub-down search before returning to the wings after visits and 10% are selected for a full body scan. This year, no items have been found.

A total of 5% of the population receive an mandatory drug test (MDT) every month in line with national guidelines. As noted last year, the Board understands that, in some cases, staff cannot process the laboratory results in time for any positives to be taken to adjudication (a disciplinary hearing when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules), as adjudication paperwork must be served within 48 hours of the results being received.

There was one recorded 'throwover' (where a parcel is thrown over the prison wall to be picked up by a prisoner) of illicit items attempted in October 2023, but it was intercepted. A single suspected drone sighting was reported over the last year.

Prisoners taken to hospital under escort are another potential route for illicit items to be brought into the prison, but there have been no incidents over the last reporting year. Despite the range of preventive measures in place, however, the consequences of drugs entering the prison can be extremely serious, fuelling debt, with the associated impact on safety and violence and potentially posing a risk to life. Although managers can measure successful interceptions and finds, they cannot know what might have been missed.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The Board has observed good progress on the refurbishment and maintenance of the showers and washrooms across living blocks, but this has not been matched by progress on roof repairs and flooring replacement. Three cells on the Mains enhanced unit have remained out of action for the entire reporting year, at a time when pressure on cell spaces has been intense. The damage caused by severe water ingress in the CSU office has worsened during this period. The office remains out of use, requiring activities, such as adjudications, segregation reviews and clerical work, to be undertaken in a single room. This is a very unsatisfactory situation for CSU staff and prisoners. The Board believes this is detrimental to the effective running of the unit.

These problems persist because roof repairs are not the responsibility of Government Facility Services Ltd (GFSL), so separate contracts must be raised and go to competition. This has been a long-running issue and, to date, there are no timelines for repairs, although in his reply to the Board's last report, the Minister stated that works would be carried out in the 2024-2025 financial year. Such delays undermine the delivery of operationally essential services and are not afforded the priority they deserve.

Members have received some complaints about the food provided, but the number of applications (written representations to the IMB) from prisoners has been low. When Board members have sampled food, it has been considered acceptable within the daily allowance of only £3.01 per prisoner. While some prisoners raised issues about the quality and quantity of food, most comments come from Mains prisoners who believe their food has been tampered with by VPs working in the kitchens. However, members have seen no evidence to support this view. The food trollies are old, but as there is no funding for replacements, they undergo a rolling refurbishment programme over the year. Some prisoners who come late to meals because of other activities told members their food was not always hot. Catering staff insist that trollies and servery counters can maintain food temperature at the required 63°C for up to four hours.

Overall, analysis shows that residential issues make up the largest number of complaints, accounting for just over 30% of those submitted.

5.2 Segregation

For the period until June 2024, the total number of prisoners located in the CSU was 101. Weekly occupancy varied from none to six, with three or four the norm. A total of 13% of prisoners have been on open ACCTs (including those transferred from other establishments). Among those segregated, prisoners aged 25-34 were a disproportionately represented group. One or two prisoners a month were registered with a disability, but in the second half of the year this increased to an average of four, reflecting the inclusion of those who are neurodiverse. Unlike last year, the Board has not had to raise concerns over the extended detention of men with serious mental health conditions.

Most stays have been short-term, ranging from a single day to 30 days. Only two prisoners have been held for more than 42 days (the limit allowed without external authorisation) during this period, including one very long-term placement of 1,114 days. This prisoner has continually been on a dirty protest, which has created significant challenges for both the CSU staff and the IMB. Very often, members have not been able to monitor him effectively because of his refusal to engage and very aggressive and volatile behaviour. The Board has observed that staff have managed his care and

supported him despite this, and they should be commended for their resilience. A very brief period of respite was arranged by transferring him to HMP Dartmoor, but he returned when Dartmoor closed in August. Without a diagnosis of mental illness, he cannot be considered for a move to a secure unit.

The Board has escalated its concerns over this case to the Prison Group Director (PGD) and been told there is no alternative, despite the huge cost of deep cleaning the cells he swaps between and the effect on the unit. Managers believe that such a long-running dirty protest is unprecedented in a category C establishment. They believe the only solution to this impasse is for the prisoner to stop his dirty protest and so are not seeking any other options. It is likely he will remain segregated (as there is nowhere else for him), either until his release or his condition deteriorates to the extent that healthcare staff must intervene to prevent a risk to life. This is not an acceptable solution in the Board's view.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

In the Board's survey, 74% of the population felt they were treated fairly and humanely all or most of the time by staff, but VPs felt they were treated somewhat better. A total of 52% of prisoners we spoke to said they felt they were treated fairly and humanely all the time. During monitoring visits, members generally report positively on staff and prisoner engagement, but comments from prisoners do vary: *'Staff are polite and helpful'; 'The apps system doesn't work; staff are not here to help us. They sit in that office and never come out.'*; *'If you put in a complaint, they know and you get picked on.'*

There were 69 formal complaints about staff, an increase of well over 200%, from 21 in the previous year. Despite this, applications made to the Board over staff behaviour were the lowest in four years. In conversation, members are often told by prisoners that the only way to get something done is to involve the IMB. Sometimes, they say that this is what staff advise them to do in their responses to complaints.

In last year's report, the Board was concerned that the key worker scheme was not being fully implemented. Staff shortages resulted in selected officers being tasked with delivery of sessions to priority groups only, such as high-risk prisoners or those self-isolating. When staff shortages were acute, even these sessions were reduced. Although all prisoners are assigned a named key worker on arrival, when asked who their key worker is, many prisoners say they do not know or have rarely met them. In June 2024, the priority approach was abandoned and key working was extended. There are now more than 350 sessions delivered each month and staff tell members that they value the work, as it can build better relationships with the prisoner. With the addition of staff from HMP Dartmoor, it is expected that key working sessions will be increased.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Better continuity of dedicated staff and well attended bi-monthly diversity and inclusion action team (DIAT) meetings observed by members indicates that equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) is becoming better embedded. However, the turbulence caused by the rapid transfers in and out of the prison, resulting from the closure of HMP Dartmoor, disrupted the stability of established prisoner representatives and forums. By August, this had stabilised, with only two prisoner ED&I roles unfilled.

The number of older prisoners (those over 50) has increased by 27% this year, to 241, roughly one-third the population (see 6.4, below). An increased number of prisoners – eight – identify as transgender. All have been reported as having had their board and local agreement in place. There is also a dedicated representative and forum for this

group. Information on ED&I, representatives, forums and events are clearly displayed in all living blocks.

A total of 88 discrimination incident report forms (DIRF) were submitted in the reporting year, averaging seven a month. Although low, this is 19% higher than last year. Most related to race 32 (36%) or disability 30 (34%), while 10% were about religion. Seventy-two were upheld. DIRF awareness has been a focus for ED&I staff, but the Board continues to receive prisoner feedback that there is a lack of knowledge about, or confidence in, the process. Five applications (2%) to the Board involved equality. In a conversation during the Board's survey, however, one prisoner told a member that he felt staff did not have a good cultural understanding of minority ethnicities.

The Board is pleased to report the imminent introduction of speech and language training for staff to support the younger prisoners who may have difficulties expressing themselves verbally.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Worship is available to prisoners of all faiths who want to attend and chaplaincy staff report an improvement in facilitating corporate worship on Sundays and Fridays. Movement to chaplaincy activities has sometimes been affected by staff shortages and chaplaincy staff work closely with movement officers to address this. A lack of officer presence for Roman Catholic Mass has been raised by chaplaincy staff, who felt this posed a risk. Such support was not reintroduced post Covid-19 and chaplaincy staff feel that this should be reviewed.

5.6 Incentives schemes

This year, residential staff have placed much emphasis on 'positive reinforcement', with the number of positive and negative entries and comments made on Nomis (the prison's internal computer system) scrutinised by managers. As a result, the number of positive comments on incentives scheme reports has shown an increase, with a reduction in negative entries. This is despite a drive to encourage staff to use the incentives scheme in the first instance, rather than resorting immediately to an adjudication.

With the change to the population balance and the increased operational capacity, those on the enhanced level of the incentives scheme account for about 70% of prisoners, with fewer than 1% on the basic level and the balance on standard. There are very few complaints received about the incentives scheme, although prisoners have queried their reduction of status when they are also receiving an adjudication award. There were 13 such applications (6% of the total) to the Board, generally concerning a perceived lack of consistency of application or poor communication by staff with regard to incentives scheme matters.

5.7 Complaints

There were 1,089 complaints received this year (compared with 1,028 the previous year), 35 of which came from just two prisoners. A total of 424 (39%) complaints were upheld; of the 665 not upheld, 83 (just over 12%) were followed up with an appeal. The number of complaints per month varied, from 57 in September 2023 to a peak of 128 in April, which coincided with the large influx of prisoners from Dartmoor. Most were responded to within the set time scales, which the Board monitors on the complaints tracker in the daily briefing sheet.

The predominant cause of complaints was residential matters (334/31%), which was very similar to the previous year. Other subjects included work (90/9%), reception

(80/7%), property (70/6%) and staff (69/6%, which was a very big increase from the previous year's total of 21). Of those against staff, 19 were for unfair treatment, of which only one was upheld and two were partially upheld. Where complaints and appeals have not been upheld, members regularly advise prisoners on how to access the Independent Prisoner Complaints Investigations (IPCI) service. However, the Board does not have data on how many of these are successful.

Following the arrival of over 260 prisoners from Dartmoor (most in the period February to May), a large number expressed unhappiness and frustration to members. They felt that being transferred, through no fault of their own, led to a change of regime and reduced employment opportunities that had seriously disadvantaged them and resulted in poorer conditions. Many spoke of feeling as if they had been '*sent to the back of the queue*'.

5.8 Property

The handling of prisoners' property, both on transfer to and within the prison, continues to be a major source of dissatisfaction and stress for prisoners. The Board received 38 applications from prisoners about property, 17% of the total. While this is down on the 47 applications in the previous year, the fall is directly accounted for by the reduction in applications about property within the establishment. The figure for property lost due to transfer remains precisely the same, suggesting, yet again, that the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework is still having no effect, despite HMPPS's assertions to the contrary.

IMB members spend a significant amount of time trying to assist prisoners with property issues. This may be because prisoners believe (and have told the Board that some staff tell them this) that '*if you want anything done, see the IMB*'. One recent case involved the loss of six boxes of legal papers that a prisoner had in his possession when sent by HMP Channings Wood to attend court, only for them to be lost by other establishments while overnighting at two other prisons on the return journey. Another prisoner, supported by the Board, had his loss of clothing investigated by the IPCI after he rejected the initial compensation offer. This took well over a year to resolve and an improved offer to be made.

The Board believes that property loss harms prisoners' mental health and wellbeing, often causing great distress. It can undermine their dignity, confidence in the efficient running of the establishment and trust in staff, let alone the cost to HMPPS time and money. One prisoner told a member: '*No one cares.*' Given the less than adequate response from HMPPS to this issue in the Board's last report, he may well be right.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

In its survey, the Board asked prisoners whether they thought that their healthcare needs were being met. A total of 69% answered that they were being met or were being met most of the time. Nevertheless, healthcare applications have increased by over 80% this reporting year, making it the single largest category⁴. Prisoners report problems with arranging appointments, including delays with hospital appointments. Other concerns relate to not being able to obtain their previously prescribed/ preferred medication and poor access to facilities for disabled prisoners.

Monthly meetings of the locality delivery quality board (LDQB) are attended by prison managers, including the Deputy Governor, senior commissioner and prison healthcare leaders. Prompt distribution of meeting minutes (including to the IMB) helps to focus the Board's monitoring on issues.

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, the provider, launched a redesigned delivery model in July 2024, intended to enhance provision of primary care. It included a renewed focus on safe staffing levels; provision for greater access to GP and ancillary services; and more clinics for vaccinations, sexual health, hepatitis B prevention and treatment. It is too early to assess any impact, but the Board will monitor any improved outcomes over the coming year.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Three GPs provide six clinics each week, which has led to a significant reduction in waiting times for GP appointments. There are now at least six dentistry sessions per week, which have also reduced waiting times, although these remain high, at approximately 75 days for routine appointments. Optician waiting times are also unacceptably high, with 287 prisoners on the waiting list – over a third of the population. Recently, optician sessions have been doubled from two to four sessions per month.

The number of prisoners attending hospital appointments has increased significantly, mainly due to the arrival of over 200 prisoners from HMP Dartmoor during the reporting year. This has put a further strain on the appointments system because prisoners previously seen in Plymouth must now attend appointments in Torbay Hospital. Some prisoners arriving from HMP Dartmoor (which was closed because of excessive levels of radon gas) have expressed concern to the Board that there is no monitoring programme in place to screen them for any potential effects of exposure.

6.3 Mental health

The mental health team is available seven days a week, which now includes provision from 8.30am to 12.00pm at weekends and on bank holidays. A psychiatrist attends the establishment on a weekly basis. Oxleas told the Board that HMP Channings Wood is the only category C prison to have this level of coverage. The Board is not concerned about waiting times for an appointment with a psychiatrist.

The number of prisoners waiting for a psychology appointment averages about 70, but the vast majority of these are waiting for group sessions, which have the longest waiting times. This is due to the need to ensure that group sizes are viable and that there are

⁴ Please note that when the figures for property lost on transfer and within the establishment are combined, it becomes the largest category.

enough staff to run groups for identified needs. There are only two assistant psychologists and a shortage of space for group sessions has been a problem. The longest waiting times have been for VP group sessions which, at 38 weeks, is excessive.

Unlike in previous years, the Board has not needed to escalate concerns over the number of prisoners with severe mental health conditions being held in the CSU while waiting for a placement at a secure mental health unit. It appears that the 28-day time limit for transfer is having the required effect. During mental health awareness week, mindfulness sessions were delivered each day. There was positive feedback from those prisoners who attended, with many expressing a desire that the sessions became a regular event.

Neurodiversity orderlies have been recruited and trained to work one-to-one with prisoners with neurodivergent conditions at work and on the wing. In the classroom, peer mentors have had neurodiversity training to support and progress those within education. Wing staff and industries instructors have also benefitted from training and now have a better awareness of how to support and manage prisoners who are neurodivergent.

The Outside the Box service continues to provide valuable support for those with challenging personality difficulties. The unit has been fully staffed for most the year, which has been reflected in the caseload capacity rising over 50% from the previous year. A visit by the area executive director of south west probation observed that staff were passionate and dedicated and making a real impact on those prisoners who had used this service.

6.4 Social care

The number of older prisoners (considered to be those over 50) has increased to just over 240, slightly less than a third of the population. Those over 60 years old (prison retirement age) make up 17% of the population, a 7% increase across a 12-month period. Over 10% of population are aged 65-85 years old. Many of these are assisted by buddies (prisoners who help their peers with daily task such as cleaning cells and collecting meals), which has helped to deliver more independent living. RECOOP continues to provide the buddy support training programme. Members have been impressed by their dedication and the Board is encouraged that this was not too disrupted by the mass transfer period in the spring. Local initiatives have provided some additional social care, such as adapted gym sessions and activities such as bowls and the delivery of chair-based exercise classes for elderly prisoners.

Last year, the Board was compelled to write to the Governor and Prison Group Director about what it considered to be the inadequate care being provided to a prisoner with severe dementia. In August 2023, he was eventually accepted for a place on the social care wing at HMP The Verne but could not be transferred until December, as the unit was not yet fully staffed. The Board's view is that the national shortage of social care provision across the prison estate is unacceptable. It continues to express the hope that the much-delayed but long-anticipated ageing population strategy will set out how this shortfall will be addressed.

Despite some concerns over the availability of wheelchairs (which managers say have now been addressed), Board members observed a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP; which provides assistance for those who cannot get themselves out of the prison unaided in an emergency) practice in one living block housing 60 PEEP prisoners. The

health and safety officer who oversaw the drill rated the evacuation satisfactory and Board members were content with the procedures witnessed.

Questions remain about how acceptable levels of decency can be maintained at a time of serious overcrowding. A member recently found two older prisoners doubled up in a single occupancy cell, one of whom had difficulty in climbing up to the top bunk. They also had to take turns sitting at the small table, as it had only a single chair. They told the IMB member that they had requested a second chair, but it had been refused because it would impede an emergency evacuation.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Time out of cell is dependent on access to purposeful activity and by incentives scheme status. Prisoners on basic (fewer than 1% of the population) have the least time out of their cell, at one hour and 15 minutes a day. Enhanced prisoners, however, get an additional two hours a day on top of any employment or activity. As well as time at work or in education, employed prisoners should have one hour and 45 minutes during the week and two hours at the weekend. Retired or unfit prisoners should receive over four hours' time out of their cell during the week and two hours at the weekend. The group that is most disadvantaged, though, is the unemployed.

Just over 25% of the population can be unemployed. They are allowed one hour and 45 minutes out of their cell during the week and two hours at weekends. This is the cohort that members regularly receive complaints from. They feel unfairly treated and insist that there is '*too much bang up*' and a lack of opportunity to work or learn. Many of these complaints were from prisoners who arrived from Dartmoor, where they claimed to have been in activities and enjoyed more time out of cell. They felt that transfer was a retrograde step and they were now '*at the back of the queue*'.

The incentives policy includes additional (or reduced) gym time, depending on the status of the prisoner. Standard status prisoners receive three sessions per week, with four for those on the enhanced level. Basic status and unemployed prisoners have one gym session a week. A few prisoners have complained that the regime sometimes forced them to choose between going to the gym or the library, when they wanted to do both.

Understandably, the most content group are those with access to purposeful activity, which should be 75% of the population, although data indicates this is not always being achieved. Nor can the Board be certain that prisoners do not always get the time out of cell to which they are entitled.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Provision is managed by the charity, Change, Grow, Live (CGL). There is a settled staff team of 17 recovery workers in place, an increase from eight in the previous year, though four vacancies remain. External volunteers from local universities have been engaged with and plans exist to extend this type of provision in the future.

Towards the end of the reporting period, 189 prisoners were participating in rehabilitation provision, including 47 recent referrals. Programmes are individually tailored to prisoners' needs, with an outreach worker tasked to engage prisoners assessed as difficult to reach.

A drugs management adjudication compact (a type of contract) has been successfully trialled. If an illicit substance is found during staff checks or cell searches, the prisoner can elect to work with CGL rather than face other sanctions. So far, 39 prisoners have signed up to this initiative and all except one have successfully completed the course.

The Board welcomes this and, although at an early stage, a reduction in adjudications has been noted. Despite this, CGL staff reported that over the summer (which saw an increased use of psychoactive substances) that they believed illicit use had been under-reported, based on disclosures from prisoners during one-to-one sessions.

Although there had been no internal provision to support prisoners with gambling addictions, a gambling lead from Addiction Recovery for All (ARA) has started to visit the prison fortnightly, to provide support where necessary. This addition to the services on offer is also welcomed by the Board.

The drug strategy lead in the prison is also working with CGL, the education department and activities staff to look at ways to incorporate some recovery-focused creative workshops into the tier 2 purposeful activities offered (see 6.7, below).

6.7 Soft skills

The Board considers that the range of activities provided either as part of tier 2, or as an addition to them, is impressive. As noted in the previous year's report, the partnership with Theatre Royal Plymouth continues to allow Mains and VPs to participate in drama workshops twice a week, helping to build confidence and communication skills. This is partly funded by dynamic purchase scheme (DPS) funding and partly by a National Lottery grant. When DPS funding for Changing Tunes ended, a successful approach to a third party ensured weekly provision could continue. Sound Communities (based in Paignton) also provide access to music for prisoners.

Staff from the healthcare and education departments run a range of courses to help prisoners gain skills and confidence in areas such as parenting; relationship building; and sustaining and confidence building. The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT, which provides families services) delivers Parent Gym, a programme to support parents in prison; there is also an over 65s club, plus yoga classes, in the sports hall. As described, below, in 7.1, library staff provide access to other arts-based activities through the Open Door project. It is a pity, though, that the partnership with Plymouth Argyle Football Club (which led to a Level 1 coaching skills award) has ended.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The most recent education, skills and work self-assessment (ESW SAR) grading was that it 'Requires Improvement', the same as last year. One of the reasons was low attendance levels of about 70% (although, for education, the daily attendance levels seen by members are regularly over 90%). Managers stress to residential staff that prisoners attending tier 1 activities are to be unlocked first and the head of reducing reoffending has created the post of 'regime driver', at custodial manager level, to maximise and monitor attendance levels. However, unauthorised absences, some ESW staff shortages and delays to repair works have continued to affect delivery. These problems contribute to one of the most common concerns voiced by prisoners: timely access to purposeful activity.

Members have generally reported positively on education provision. The partnership with the Shannon Trust⁵ for a coordinator and mentors has been maintained and is thriving. This key asset enables prisoners to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and to progress to other courses. Distance-learning participation is high, with an average of 45 learners enrolled over the reporting year, split between Open University and Prisoners' Education Trust courses. Data provided to the Board shows that for applications HMP Channings Wood is the fourth highest prison nationally, with 71% being successful.

Other positive initiatives have been the recruitment of neurodiversity orderlies to support prisoners who are neurodivergent in education, industries and on the wings. To promote in-cell learning Way2Learn TV has reached over 90 learners, supplementing the curriculum and providing a 'taster' for formal courses.

The library remains an outstanding area, in the Board's view. It is well run, well used and is 'not just about books'. It is central to the prison reading strategy and supports the development of soft skills. Arts-based activities are provided through the Arts Council's Open Door Project⁶. This has funded a series of workshops, which add educational and therapeutic value. Board members have often witnessed the creativity and achievements of prisoners taking part. However, whilst the library has been identified as good practice in the National Prison Reading Framework, the Board shares the frustration of staff that processes are still manual and stock and lending have not been digitised. Additionally, following the arrival of more than 200 prisoners from HMP Dartmoor and the resulting change in the population balance, the Board is concerned that sessions have not yet been adjusted, with VPs (now the largest cohort) disadvantaged.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The problems noted in the Board's last report, with regard to restricting the ability of activities staff to fully deliver relevant skills training and meaningful work, remain. As in previous winters, members regularly record that many industries have had to close for significant periods due to inadequate heating and low temperatures. Prisoners had to be sent back to their wings. Less work from Prison Service Industries and staff shortages

⁵ A registered charity that works in prisons to train and inspire prisoners who can read to teach those who cannot.

⁶ Open Door aims to provide arts and creative experiences to prisoners, along with potential routes into employment, through collaborative partnerships with local artists and arts organisations.

combined to reduce the number of prisoners required at work or in the classroom. Consequently, the target of 75% of prisoners in purposeful activity is not being met. When a member visited the activities hub for a snapshot view last winter, 72% were in activities, but this had fallen to 70% by April 2024. This was despite an increase in purposeful activity places compared with the previous year, achieved by increasing class sizes, securing additional funding to run DPS contracts and creating new work roles.

The situation has not been helped by the continuing population pressures and the need to quickly absorb and allocate activities to Dartmoor prisoners. Lack of access to activities or the time taken for allocations was frequently raised to the Board by prisoners, especially those from Dartmoor who had been in work or education there. The target of being allocated an activity within six weeks of arrival was not being met. The Board accepts, however, that these problems and pressures have been imposed on managers, without additional resources being provided to fully address them.

Nevertheless, members report on many positives when visiting training and industries. Catering, bicycle repair (which received the Best Partnership award from Torbay Council), bricklaying and painting and decorating are often cited in monitoring reports as examples of good practice. The Board also welcomes the use of DPS provision to run scaffolding and forklift truck courses in response to the demand from the construction and warehousing industries. The 97% success rate achieved on completed vocational courses is also to be applauded.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The Board recognises the significant demands placed on the offender management unit (OMU) managers and staff by the cumulative impact of population pressures; out-of-balance offender flows; the rapid departures and arrivals due to the closure of Dartmoor; the change in population balance between Mains and VPs; and SDS40 (standard determinate sentences early release scheme) sentence recalculations. Invariably, these occurred at short notice, reducing time for preparation and forcing staff into a reactive posture to address changing priorities. Consequently, day-to-day tasks suffered. The Board's findings and outcomes for prisoners should be seen in this context.

The backlog of offender assessments noted in last year's report had increased by late 2023 to over 60. However, by May 2024, managers expressed hope that they would soon be 'into single figures soon'. At the end of August 2024, there were 32 overdue. Prisoners who spoke to members expressed frustration that they did not have a sentence plan.

Release on temporary licence (RoTL) has not been used often enough to enhance prisoners' employment or training skills and prepare them for release. Prison population pressures again limited opportunities, as prisoners were transferred to the open estate (73 this reporting year). Many of these would have been RoTL candidates. Only a very few placements were achieved, either working with PACT or maintaining family ties.

The Board remains extremely concerned by the last Government's decision to reject the recommendation to resentence IPP prisoners. HMP Channings Wood holds the highest number of IPP prisoners who have never been released on licence (and, therefore, are ineligible for the IPP licence reforms) in a total of 41 IPP prisoners, as of June 2024. Members have seen at first hand the utter despair felt by many of them and reflected in the numbers on an ACCT or under constant supervision. The case study of Prisoner A is included in Annex C. The Board's view is that IPP is incompatible with the principle of humane treatment. It is inhumane and, quite possibly, a form of mental torture.

7.4 Family contact

The Board has few concerns in this area. Families' staff are well motivated and, despite some staff shortages earlier in the year, regularly receive positive feedback from visitors. In the most recent survey by PACT, 93% of those who responded were either satisfied or completely satisfied with the visit they experienced. This is supported by the Board's monitoring of visits (including themed family days and the summer sports day), where family members were very positive about their experience. *'That was a really good visit'* is typical of the comments, with visitors talking of a welcoming and non-threatening atmosphere.

PACT also plans to begin parenting skills' courses, funded through DPS. Storybook Dads (where prisoners record themselves reading a story for the children) continues to provide a much valued and well used service, enhancing family contact.

There are areas that require improvement. Applications concerning phone numbers added to personal identification number (PIN) lists (especially following transfer) are regularly received. Less frequently, members hear that some prisoners have been unable to make calls following their reception, as their PIN hasn't been activated. Problems with social video calls visits have also been reported. These either relate to technical failures or problems with bookings or prisoners not being informed in good time. On a recent visit, PACT staff told IMB that on at least three occasions social video calls and social visits had been double booked for the same prisoner.

7.5 Resettlement planning

In its survey of prisoners in their resettlement window, the picture was mixed. Two-thirds felt they had either received enough or some help to prepare for their release, while one-third claimed to have had none. Significantly, more Mains prisoners (almost twice as many as VPs) reported getting no help. This divided opinion is reflected by anecdotal evidence when speaking to prisoners.

Progress has been made in several areas. The employment hub IT and virtual campus installation in the library was completed in April 2024, including a digital jobs board and a work readiness assessment tool. The employment advisory board is well established and links with national employers, such as Iceland and Greene King, and local construction and hospitality firms, have been created. End-of-year reporting by community probation staff shows that six months after release, 46% of those discharged were in employment. At the six-week post release point, this figure was just under 20%.

Considerable effort has gone into improving accommodation outcomes for discharged prisoners through partnerships with Interventions Alliance to source accommodation and the community accommodation service tier 3 (CAS3) scheme (which provides temporary accommodation for up to 84 nights for homeless prison leavers). This has contributed to over 95% of discharged prisoners having accommodation on release, a similar figure to last year. By August, however, managers were reporting concerns that with the reduced planning times caused by SDS40, some prisoners would be discharged without accommodation or referrals to councils.

Despite the successes noted (achieved when resettlement staff were under the additional pressures due to the influx of prisoners from HMP Dartmoor and early release schemes), it is disappointing that the promised departure lounge initiative is still not in place. (A departure lounge is a space where prisoners who have just been discharged can charge mobile phones so that staff can add useful phone numbers; phone their community probation officer; be given basic toiletries and, if necessary, warm clothing.)

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	298

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	11	27
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	19	13
C	Equality	1	5
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	9	17
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	13	18
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	9	3
F	Food and kitchens	9	5
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	15	28
H1	Property within the establishment	22	13
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	25	25
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	10	3
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), RoTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	27	18
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	26	23
K	Transfers	10	7
L	Miscellaneous	11	16
	Total number of applications	217	221

Annex A

Service providers

- Family Services: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
- Educational and vocational courses: Weston College
- Careers guidance: Job Centre Plus and Prospects (Shaw Trust)
- Literacy and numeracy support: Shannon Trust
- Healthcare: Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.
 - GP service provided by Dr PA
 - Most acute care is provided by Torbay Hospital
 - Dental health services are provided by Time for Teeth
- Drug recovery services: Change, Grow, Live
- Buddy Support Training: Resettlement and Care for Older Ex Offenders and Prisoners (RECOOP)
- Maintenance and repairs: Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL)

Annex B

IMB survey on Safety, Fair and Humane Treatment, Health and Wellbeing and Progression and Resettlement

A survey of 148 prisoners (20% of the prison population at the time) was conducted from 3-30 June 2024, after the main influx of prisoners from HMP Dartmoor. The ratio of VPs to Mains reflected the new population balance: 82 VPs (55% of survey) and 66 Mains (45% of survey). All were randomly selected by Board members when they visited the wings, and they were asked four basic questions, as follows.

DO YOU FEEL SAFE?

	Yes	Most of the time	Some of the time	No	Yes + most of the time	No + some of the time
VP	75%	5%	15%	5%	80%	20%
MAINS	92%	5%	3%	0%	97%	3%
VP and Mains	82%	5%	10%	3%	87%	13%

87% of the population felt safe all/most of the time, but Mains felt significantly safer.

ARE YOU TREATED FAIRLY AND HUMANELY?

	Yes	Most of the time	Some of the time	No	Yes + most of the time	No + some of the time
VP	56%	20%	16%	8%	76%	24%
MAINS	47%	24%	17%	12%	71%	29%
VP and Mains	52%	22%	16%	10%	74%	26%

74% of the population felt they were treated fairly and humanely all/most of the time but VPs felt they were treated somewhat better.

ARE YOUR HEALTHCARE NEEDS BEING MET?

	Yes	Most of the time	Some of the time	No	Yes + most of the time	No + some of the time
VP	37%	28%	21%	14%	65%	35%
MAINS	60%	15%	8%	17%	75%	25%
VP and Mains	48%	21%	15%	16%	69%	31%

69% of the population surveyed felt their needs were being met all/most of the time, but Mains felt significantly more satisfied.

HAVE YOU HAD HELP TO PREPARE FOR RELEASE?

	Yes, enough	Some, but not enough	No help
VP	43%	34%	23%
MAINS	45%	10%	45%
VP and Mains	44%	22%	34%

44% of those surveyed felt they had received enough help to prepare for release. But 34% said they had had no help. Significantly, more Mains prisoners, almost twice as many as VPs, reported that they received no help.

Annex C

IPP case study

In 2006, when he was 19, Prisoner A* was sentenced to an 18-month IPP for possession of a firearm. His first parole board hearing was concluded in 2009. He was unsuccessful and was advised to apply again in two years' time after he had completed the necessary offending behaviour courses. At his next Parole Board hearing, he was, again, unsuccessful. The reasons given were that he had not completed the required courses and that his behaviour had been poor. He was, again, unsuccessful in 2012, because he had not completed the necessary offending behaviour courses. Prisoner A told the Board he had been willing to engage but that there were long waiting lists and he had not been allocated a place.

He was moved to a category B prison in 2013 where, at another parole board hearing, he was told that he needed to complete intensive therapy treatment. He had not been able to do so by his next hearing, in 2015, which was adjourned, pending completion. Prisoner A had now become frustrated and in 2016 he was deselected from treatment.

After serving ten years of his original 18-month sentence, he was at a category C prison, in a more supportive environment. His behaviour improved and he gained employment. In September 2019, following a parole board hearing, he achieved category D status and was moved to open conditions. After four months, he was assessed as a flight risk and returned to the closed estate, before returning to open conditions in August 2020. Prisoner A stated that, by then, he had lost faith in the system and that, after having served 14 years, he now had no expectation of ever being released. In October 2020, he absconded. Despite this, in September 2021, his parole board hearing recommended his release on licence. He had been in prison for 15 years for an offence that carried a maximum term of ten years.

In June 2022, he was recalled, and by August Prisoner A arrived at HMP Channings Wood. A parole board decision in March 2023 was adjourned to allow a police witness to attend. In June, after a full hearing of over six hours, the panel felt they could not make a recommendation until yet more evidence was given by his community offender manager and the police. The hearing was further adjourned until December 2023, when it was unsuccessful. This so undermined Prisoner A's state of mind that he threatened to take his own life. Staff considered the risk sufficiently high that he was placed on an ACCT and put under constant supervision. After a series of reviews and a great deal of support, he was able to return to a normal location. His next (and eighth) hearing will be in February 2025.

Apart from a brief period on licence, he has been in prison for over half of his life, following an IPP sentence of 18 months. Speaking to the Board he said: *'It took everything from me, I came in aged 19 and didn't get out till I was 34. I was recalled when I was 35, back in for two years now. It's demoralising, but it's worse for my family. It's taken a son from my mother and deprived my daughter of her dad. When I was sentenced, she was 22 months old, she has just turned 20. The only thing it hasn't taken is my life. They don't care, I'm just a number to them. I still believe that I was lost in the system and I'm fed up jumping through hoops. I did deserve prison for what I done, but I didn't deserve this. I just want to go home and get my life back.'*

*Prisoner A approved the inclusion of his case in the annual report.



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