



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Littlehey

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

Published January 2025



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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

2.1 HMP Littlehey, located in the village of Perry in Cambridgeshire, is a category C training prison for men convicted of sexual offences. It is the largest prison in Europe for men convicted of sexual offences. The prison housed over 54 nationalities and 28 religious denominations¹, not including those stating 'no religion', atheist or agnostic.

2.2 The prison held 1,225 prisoners at the end of the reporting period, compared 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 1,240 and an average end-of-month population of 1,236. There were 1,171 prisoners held at the end of the previous reporting period, which had an average end-of-month population of 1,168.

2.3 A total of 528 (43%) of prisoners were aged 50 years or over at the time of writing the report, in September 2024, slightly lower than the 44.8% in the previous period.

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

3.2 Safety

3.2.1 The Board observed that, generally, HMP Littlehey continued to be a safe and secure prison.

3.2.2 There was one major incident, on 31 May 2023, that resulted in the opening of the command suite to deal with a potentially serious incident: a routine generator test caused major electrical outages across the prison and the problem was only resolved when UK Networks (the electricity transmission provider) were called in.

3.2.3 The prison continued to have a relatively low rate of prisoner-on-prisoner violence.

Fair and humane treatment

3.2.4 From the Board's observations, prisoners were generally treated with respect, decency and humanity. The support provided for ill prisoners and the engagement with their families at end-of-life care demonstrated compassion and respect.

3.2.5 The mental health team are particularly notable for their consistently high level of committed support for prisoners, particularly to those identified as being at risk of self-harm.

3.2.6 Of particular note is the poor care given to prisoners' legal documents during and after transfer into HMP Littlehey.

3.2.7 The Board is also concerned about the lack of attention given to prisoners' external complaints back to other prisons from which they have been transferred, even from senior staff, leading to prisoners' distress and cost.

3.2.8 A significant development during the reporting year was the opening of the new G wing. Prisoners have been specially selected to be housed in this wing, based on their incentives scheme status and their time until release. Consequently, the wing requires lower levels of staffing and presents fewer security challenges. It consists of 60 single cells, each with their own shower rooms and direct access to an open courtyard.

Health and wellbeing

3.2.9 The support and resources provided by the prison to meet the prisoners' health and wellbeing needs are generally good, in the Board's view, although the HMIP inspection identified some issues and the lack of on-site 24-hour healthcare continues to be questionable.

3.2.10 The long waiting times for prisoners to access specialist healthcare have all been addressed, other than physiotherapy and podiatry. These issues have also been noted in previous IMB reports over the last two years.

3.2.11 A significant addition this year has been the recruitment of a Neurodiversity Support Manager (NSM), who has been able to engage very successfully with prisoners requiring specialist support and also raise awareness of neurodiversity needs among the staff.

Progression and resettlement

3.2.12 As stated in many previous reports, HMP Littlehey is not a resettlement prison and is not funded for this activity, although it typically releases significant numbers of prisoners directly into the community every year. The Board acknowledges that the numbers so released have fallen over the last few years.

3.2.13 Given the lack of funding and limited resources available, the prison continues to make good efforts to support the resettlement of prisoners. However, the challenges created by prisoners often having to be resettled outside of their home area continue for those involved in preparing prisoners for their release.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

3.3.1 The Minister should note that the IMB has been operating with just three active members against an establishment of 16; and that, with such low numbers, it is increasingly difficult to meaningfully carry out the statutory requirements.

3.3.2 The Board is disappointed that, despite repeated requests for change, the IMB recruitment process continues to be inadequate and inappropriate to support the timely recruitment of candidates with the necessary qualities and skills. How will the Minister address this issue?

3.3.3 As stated in the reports of the last two years, there continue to be too many prisoners forced to share cells, including those initially designed for single occupancy. While the Board acknowledges the Minister's response to this point in our last report, it remains concerned that the number of prisoners being forced to share a cell continues to increase. With the pressures on the prison population continuing to grow, what strategies will the Minister deploy to ensure prisoners are safe and treated with respect and that the level of cell sharing in unsuitable conditions is addressed?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

3.3.4 The Board is disappointed that the estate-wide management of prisoner property on transfer continues to be extremely poor, and that staff are not adhering to the policy guidelines for transfer of legal papers. Also, when problems do arise, even senior staff appear indifferent to resolving issues, with too many problems having to be referred to the Independent Prisoner Complaints Investigations (IPCI) team. Next to cell sharing, this is the biggest problem affecting prisoners' wellbeing, and the Board was extremely disappointed by the failure to acknowledge the seriousness of this issue when it was raised in our last report.

3.3.5 The Board would like to know when IT systems that have been deployed in other prisons, to better manage internal complaints, are going to be deployed in HMP Littlehey. This would allow a significant improvement in the tracking and analysis of complaints, as well freeing-up a significant amount of staff resource.

TO THE GOVERNOR

3.3.6 The Board notes the continued high level of internal complaints at HMP Littlehey. Notwithstanding the comment to the Prison Service, above, the Board

considers that a significant number of complaints could be avoided by better communication between staff and prisoners, particularly, but not exclusively, during key worker sessions. The Board will be monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives put in place to improve communication between staff and prisoners.

3.4 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Action taken
To the Minister		
There continue to be too many prisoners forced to share cells, including those initially designed as single cells.	Minister recognised the problem but pointed out that the manageable level of overcrowding is set by prison management and stated that the new wing had slightly alleviated the problem.	Cell sharing is now back to the level it was during the last reporting period.
To the Prison Service		
The Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, introduced in September 2022, had to be withdrawn.	The response summarised the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework without offering any additional solutions.	The management of property on transfer has not improved. There are significant issues of poor policy application and it is not managed as an end-to-end process. Also, senior staff are not taking the problem seriously.
Concerns with the performance of five London prisons in responding in a timely manner to property complaints.	This point was not specifically addressed in the response.	There has been no improvement in property transfer from the five London prisons.
Prisoners being transferred to HMP Littlehey, which does not have a 24-hour healthcare facility, when they were already very unwell.	The response detailed the healthcare processes used during prisoner transfer. It did not address whether or not HMP Littlehey should have 24-hour healthcare.	Some unwell prisoners are still being transferred in.
No funds available to enable the prison to replace rusty and damaged equipment in the gyms.	Stated that HMP Littlehey recognised the need to replace equipment and had used the recreation budget.	Some equipment is still in a poor condition, but the prison accesses funds as available.
Several cells on a wing did not have any internal heating.	Pointed out that £11 million had been spent replacing the heating pipework. But recognised that there were ongoing faults in the under-floor heating.	The wings have continued to suffer from unreliable heating and hot water.

Long waiting lists for attendance on behaviour programmes.	Stated that HMP Littlehey had 36 prisoners awaiting programmes and that staff were assessing prisoners 12-18 months before release.	Behaviour programmes are now being delivered to target.
To the Governor		
The use of temporary freezers.	The Governor continually briefed on progress at the monthly IMB board meetings.	The temporary freezers were removed during the reporting period.
Prisoner perception that the prisoner forums are just 'talking shops'.	The Governor accepted this comment and undertook to provide more focus on delivering actions.	The provision of timely responses to actions is improving.
Diversity and inclusion data showing an over-representation of black and Muslim prisoners in adjudications (a disciplinary hearing held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules), and of Muslim prisoners being subject to use of force.	Prison analysis showed that it was prisoners with a mixed ethnic background who were over-represented (39 prisoners/2.34%) in adjudications, not black prisoners, but Muslim prisoners were over-represented (118 prisoners/2.32%). For use of force, prison analysis showed that the Muslim population was not over-represented.	The Board is grateful for the clarification and notes the improving analysis.
What is the process in place to identify trends in the number of internal complaints, which were notably increasing.	Complaints were monitored and analysed throughout this reporting period. From March to June 2023, monthly complaints decreased from 299 to 137, but then steadily rose again to over 300 over the next six months. It was noted that the increase was related to changes to B wing, issues on K wing, TV signal problems, and a backlog of orders in the business hub, exacerbated by a rise in the number of serial complaints.	As is acknowledged, the number of complaints has returned to the same high level during the reporting period.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 During the reporting period, 555 prisoners transferred to Littlehey, a significant increase on the 421 recorded in the previous reporting period. The number of transfers per month varied, from the lowest of 36 in October, to the highest of 88 in July, reflecting the opening of the new G wing to accommodate an extra 60 prisoners. Arrivals after the 'lockout time' of 4pm have continued, with prisoners arriving later receiving the 'basics', including seeing healthcare, with the full process being conducted the following day.

4.1.2 From the Board's observations, in general, the reception process for those arriving at the prison is well managed, with good collaboration between the reception staff, orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) and induction wing officers. This view was also generally reflected in the comments in the HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) report of the inspection carried out during 4-14 September 2023. However, it was interesting to read the comments on the reception process in prisoner survey responses, where they highlighted difficulty getting phone numbers and contacting family, and a lack of staff help to deal with these problems.

4.1.3 The induction wing contains only double cells, and the 1,240 operational capacity of the prison assumes that all these will house two prisoners. However, the prison receives high-risk prisoners who cannot share a cell and have to be accommodated in the induction wing. This results in induction staff constantly having to move prisoners out early to create the wing spaces required to accommodate new arrivals to the prison.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 During the reporting year in HMP Littlehey, there were 11 deaths in custody, all of which were, apparently, due to natural causes. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) investigations into prisoner deaths all concluded that the clinical healthcare received at HMP Littlehey was good.

4.2.2 One of the PPO reports specifically commented on the compassionate end-of-life care for prisoners at HMP Littlehey and the Board, again, wishes to commend the prison for this.

4.2.3 During the reporting period, one of the PPO investigations identified the need for clear procedures between healthcare and prison staff when escorting prisoners to hospital, to ensure the restraints used on prisoners were appropriate to the public risks involved. There were two similar recommendations in the previous reporting period. The IMB recommends that this should be subject to continual monitoring by the Governor.

4.2.4 HMP Littlehey continues to participate in the Samaritans' Listener scheme (where prisoners are trained by the Samaritans to offer confidential emotional support to their peers). There were ten active Listeners on the rota for the last month of the reporting period, providing invaluable support to their fellow prisoners. The Listener team was being called an average of about 60 times per month until the in-cell phones were introduced, when the average number of monthly calls fell to about

40. Some prisoners need Listener support on a regular basis, in addition to that provided through other channels such as the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) process (which is used to support and manage prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide). The Board is pleased to note the multiple support channels available to those at the prison who need them.

4.2.5 The Board notes that self-harm incidents appear to have increased during the reporting period to 365 per 1,000 prisoners (source: the prison's performance hub), although this is still well below the national average.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 In the Board's view, HMP Littlehey continues to be a relatively safe place for staff and prisoners alike. Prison records show similar trends to those reported last year, with the number of assaults on staff increasing slightly from 17 in the previous reporting period to 19 for the current period, while prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased from 63 to 79 over the same period (source: the performance hub). While this is, once again, a disappointing increase, it remains significantly less than the national rates.

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 The Board is disappointed to report that, according to the prison's records, force was used 147 times (118 unplanned and 29 planned) during the reporting period. This is a significant increase of 50% on the previous period, and a return to the levels of two years ago, although the numbers are still low. The number of prisoners involved increased slightly to 65 (roughly 5% of the prison population), with 20 prisoners subject to force on more than one occasion.

4.4.2 Body worn video cameras (BWVCs) are recorded as being worn on 98 of the occasions where force was used, and the Board is pleased to note that this is a significant improvement on the 59 occasions during the previous reporting period; the use of BWVC is gaining traction. PAVA incapacitant spray was drawn on two occasions but never used.

4.4.3 The National Tactical Response Group, a specialist unit assisting in safely managing and resolving serious incidents, was not deployed to HMP Littlehey during the reporting period.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

4.5.1 Mandatory drug testing (MDT) has been in place during the reporting year. Over the 12 months, 728 MDTs have taken place, of which only 43 were positive (source: the performance hub), which is far lower than the 120 of the last reporting period.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 There were 1,001 prisoners accommodated in single-occupancy cells and 224 in double-occupancy cells, of whom two were the sole occupants. A total of 74 cells designed for single occupancy were allocated for sharing by two prisoners. There were four constant-watch cells available, including one in the care and separation unit (CSU).

5.1.2 A significant development during the reporting year was the opening of the new G wing, which consists of 60 rapid deployment cells (RDCs). Prisoners have been specially selected for this wing, based on their incentives scheme status and their time until release. Consequently, the wing requires lower levels of staffing and presents fewer security challenges. It consists of 60 single cells, each with their own shower room and direct access to an open courtyard. There were initial problems with the showers, but these were resolved. However, the Board is pleased to note that the selection of prisoners for the wing was well organised and implemented.

5.1.3 The wing functions were restructured after the opening of G wing. Prisoners now know when they come into reception where they will live to start with, what each wing does and how they can move around as part of their progression. F wing is now a resettlement unit. G wing is for prisoners serving sentences of ten or more years and offers the opportunity for them to demonstrate independent living and emotional management. E wing is the reception wing; I and J wings provide support for elderly prisoners; and M wing is for those with Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. A wing is a recovery unit, while D wing is predominately for prisoners with life sentences. There is also a veterans' spur. The other wings are community wings.

5.1.4 The residential accommodation, set in extensive well-maintained gardens, comprises two distinct facilities (Lakeside and Woodlands), built at different times and to standards applicable at the time of construction. This creates challenges for the maintenance of the infrastructure, fixtures and fittings. Reflecting the two facilities, there are also two kitchens, two healthcare centres, two libraries, two gyms and two multi-faith rooms. There is one all-weather sports pitch, the second having been decommissioned to make way for the new G wing. The prison also has a visits' hall, an education centre, workshops and a CSU, which has eight operational cells.

5.1.5 As in previous years, there have been issues with water and heating on the wings. At times, the water temperature and pressure have been erratic, while the heating has been insufficient. Of particular note was the continued inadequacy of the heating system on the Woodlands wings, which include the two wings for elderly prisoners.

5.1.6 A very positive development has been the roll-out of in-cell phones, which was a long-overdue project. Needless to say, it has been extremely well received by the prisoners.

5.1.7 In the Board's view, the standard of food provided by the two kitchens continues to be of a high quality. It is another positive step that new freezers have finally been installed and the significant number of portable external freezers are no longer being rented.

5.1.8 The Board is pleased to see both the food focus group and the prison council

have become regular meetings and the staff are now providing much more timely responses to questions, although there is still scope for improvement. However, communication amongst the prisoners could be better, as the Board still gets questions that should be directed to wing reps.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 The CSU, where prisoners are segregated, still has only eight cells available to hold prisoners, with cell 1 used only for searches, cell 7 used for constant watch and cell 9 remaining out of use due to structural issues. To the Board's knowledge, there are no plans to change this situation. On occasion, the existence of one constant-watch cell has resulted in prisoners who should be held in CSU being held in the few constant watch cells on the wings. Those adjudicated for cellular confinement have also sometimes had to be located in these cells on the wings.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 The HMIP inspection of the prison in September 2023 noted that key work was limited. The Board is pleased to note that, since then, key worker sessions have been re-scheduled to make them less frequent but longer; the Board will be interested to see the effect. The Board has noted that the comments entered in Nomis (the internal computer system) are improving, with the number of key worker quality assessments increasing. Good relationships between prisoners and key workers can only be beneficial.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The Board has not made any observations that have given us reason to think that there might be any significant issues with equality and diversity. The diversity and inclusion action team (DIAT) meeting has continued to take place monthly, although the data analysis to inform discussion has yet to move from statistics to analysis. Indeed, one of the key concerns from the HMIP inspection was that the promotion of equality and diversity was limited by a failure to use data effectively and by a lack of consultation.

Older prisoners

5.4.2 The over-50s cohort comprised 43% (528) of the population at the end of the period, marginally down from almost 45% in the last reporting period. Of those, 174 (34%) were in their 60s and 136 (26%) were 70 or older. The Board is pleased to note that HMP Littlehey has continued to be proactive in seeking to meet the needs of these older prisoners, extending the activities available to this population and working with the gym team to provide gym sessions appropriate for them have all been notable during this period. These initiatives add to the continuing close collaboration between prison staff, social care and dementia specialist and the ongoing training of the staff on these wings to enable them to provide the appropriate support.

5.4.3 Once again, the maintenance of wheelchairs continued to be an issue during this reporting year. The Board has highlighted this issue in numerous previous annual reports and progress in resolving the situation remains slow.

Learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD)

5.4.4 The Board is very pleased to note the appointment of a neurodiversity support

manager during the reporting period, allowing much more focused support for a significant number of prisoners.

5.4.5 The Board also acknowledges the continued strong links between healthcare and the prison departments to help ensure that the support provided to those with learning difficulties and disabilities is appropriate to their needs.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners

5.4.6 The Board is unable to make meaningful comment on this subject because the data in the performance hub appears to be out of date and is difficult to analyse. In the Board's view, there do not appear to be any significant issues.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 The chaplaincy continues to provide support to all faiths and provides services for all of the religious festivals, with the music groups and choirs making a significant contribution to the Christmas services.

5.6 Incentives schemes

5.6.1 The HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Incentives Policy Framework (IPF), released in 2019, has now been fully implemented and the prison has communicated with prisoners to publicise this. Work on ensuring prisoners fully understand this policy remains a work in progress.

5.6.2 The Board has been pleased to see the introduction of IPF forums, involving prisoners, to review the implementation of the policy, consider any concerns, moderate the application to ensure consistency, and determine ways of ensuring the policy is better understood by the wider prison population. The sharing of data relating to IPF status for groups of the prisoner population has also been welcomed and it is hoped that, over time, this will ensure the scheme is shown as being applied equally to all.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 The total number of internal complaints and appeals (Comp 1 and Comp 1a) has remained at the same level, from 2,893 in the last reporting period to 2,945 in this. The Board is disappointed to note that this high number of internal complaints includes a disproportionately high number of complaints from a relatively small number of 'serial complainers' and that many of the issues could have been handled by staff or key workers.

5.7.2 Also, the number of complaints to the Governor (Comp 2s, which are confidential) has remained at roughly the same level, from 389 in the last reporting period to 370 in the year under review. However, there has been an increase in the level of complaints (Comp 1 and Comp 1a) from HMP Littlehey to other prisons, from 268 in the last reporting period to 425 this year. Also, the number of complaints from other prisons to HMP Littlehey has increased from 99 to 163.

5.7.3 The Board no longer has sight of Comp 2s as, from January 2023, the IMB was no longer part of the confidential complaints access process. In accordance with the re-issue of the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework on 16 January 2023, confidential access complaints (Comp 2s) are now only sent to either the Prison Governor/Director or the Prison Group Director.

5.7.4 The Board is disappointed to note that all complaints are still being raised on

paper, causing a significant level of effort for staff by comparison with the IT systems in use in other prisons. Also, the lack of an IT system hinders any attempt at analysis and trending.

5.7.5 The Board notes that the low and disrupted staffing levels in the business hub have had a significant impact on prisoner welfare. This is due to the slow processing of internal complaints and the delays in hastening responses from other prisons to external complaints, usually involving property transfer. The slow processing of canteen and catalogue orders also affects prisoner welfare.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 The Board, together with the prisoners, continues to be frustrated that the Prison Service is still unable to properly manage prisoners' property when transferring between prisons, with the treatment of prisoners' legal documents of particular concern. Despite instruction to the contrary in the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework (24 October 2024), some prisons are still refusing to let legal documents go with the prisoner on transfer. In one particular case at HMP Littlehey, a prisoner was not re-united with his legal papers for five months, despite needing them for an appeal. The refusal of the sending prison to allow the documents to travel with the prisoner was exacerbated by the provision of incorrect tracking data, multiple parcel logs at the gate and the documents being inexplicably put under someone's desk. And nobody in the Prison Service seems to be responsible for investigating such losses, requiring a constant and significant involvement by the IMB.

5.8.2 A second incident of a prisoner not being allowed to carry his legal documents, could not be progressed at all by the IMB because the head of business assurance (HoBA) at the sending prison refused to respond to the HoBA at HMP Littlehey when asked for tracking information. Such an apparent lack of concern at such a senior level defies belief. The only recourse was to tell the prisoner to submit an application to the PPO.

5.8.3 It is the opinion of the Board that the fundamental problems behind the continuing property issues are two-fold:

- Firstly, there is a lack of end-to-end process ownership. The prisons operate as stovepipes, either as senders or receivers, and the carriers operate under a separate contract. When something goes wrong, nobody takes responsibility for resolving an issue; it is left to the prisoner to use the complaints procedure, which has very 'hit and miss' results, and then for the IMB or the PPO to investigate.
- Secondly, the lack of an IT system to track property from start to destination means there is inadequate visibility of where property is. At HMP Littlehey, which relies on paper logs to record property movements, there isn't even a consistent set of tracking information between the business hub and reception.

5.8.4 The issue of property loss increases year-on-year, with no signs that the Prison Service has any strategies to reduce or resolve it. During the reporting year, of the 268 complaints/appeals to other establishments, 184 related to property. This was an increase to 69.7% of the total, up from 50.2% for the previous period, which

was already an increase from 42.7% the year before. There were also 48 complaints about property to HMP Littlehey from other establishments, representing 48.5% of the total of 99.

5.8.5 The Board notes that property complaints to the five London prisons, HMP Thameside, HMP Wandsworth, HMP Pentonville, HMP Brixton and HMP Wormwood Scrubs, continue to be high. In addition to the number of complaints, these prisons often have to be chased, sometimes multiple times, to obtain any response, causing yet more distress to the prisoners affected, whose missing property can contain important legal and cherished personal items. The Board will continue to actively monitor this area in the future.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 Two of the priority concerns from the HMIP inspection were that the healthcare services lacked the resources to meet the needs of the population and that the governance and oversight of medicines' management was weak. Indeed, the lack of 24-hour healthcare is often questioned by prisoners, although the ambulance response has always resolved any urgent medical needs outside working hours.

6.1.2 The Board notes that primary care, mental healthcare, pharmacy and administration staffing levels have continued to be a challenge to service provision, with recruitment required with some inevitable impact on service levels. Physiotherapy services continued to operate at below optimal levels and the Board notes the upward trend in waiting times due to the reduction in physiotherapy clinics towards the end of this reporting year, due to availability of staff. Podiatry provision was reduced, due to changes in the staff base, and this has impacted waiting times for those with mobility and co-morbidity issues, which in turn increases risk.

6.1.3 Staff from the healthcare centre continued to assess all prisoners on their arrival at HMP Littlehey and were actively involved with those on ACCTs, including regular attendance at reviews. They also attended Rule 45 reviews (at which the prison determines if the prisoner should remain segregated) and conducted daily CSU visits to ensure the care needs of those in segregation were closely monitored.

6.1.4 The average monthly number of healthcare complaints received during the 2023-2024 reporting year decreased significantly when compared with last year. This has been directly related to correspondence clinics run by the deputy heads of specialist, secured and clinical services post the pandemic.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 The Board is pleased to note that most clinics ran as planned, with the exception of podiatry, as the staffing model was under review.

6.2.2 The number of prisoners who did not attend their appointments (DNAs) once again fluctuated during the year; this has been monitored and the impact on overall service delivery was minimal. Posters are sited in both the healthcare departments for patient information relating to this.

6.2.3 The Board is disappointed to see the continuing long waiting times for optician appointments. The wait to see an optician has been significant during this reporting year, reducing as the year progressed but still high.

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 The mental health team consists of eight members, including a visiting consultant psychiatrist, with just three of those members able to attend both CSU and ACCT reviews. At the end of the reporting period, the team caseload was 73, and the average number of referrals was 56 per month, all with mental health assessments (MHA) completed within five days. This is a significant increase on the 20 MHAs per month during the previous reporting period, because the team is now fully staffed with people able to complete the assessments and they have been consistently addressing the backlog. The Board is extremely pleased to see that prisoners with mental health issues are being seen so quickly.

6.3.2 The Board is also pleased to see that the mental health drop-in clinics are continuing each month, and that there are also specialist groups for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), trauma and mental health skills. These are all of great benefit to the prisoners.

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 The Board is pleased to report that the high standard of social care at HMP Littlehey continues, with strong links between the prison, healthcare and social care. The level of palliative care also remains high and the Board is confident that the growing need for such care at the prison will be met with professionalism and empathy.

6.4.2 The Board is also very pleased to note the significant level of time and thought given by both staff and prisoners to programmes to support disabled prisoners.

6.5 Exercise, regime

6.5.1 HMP Littlehey continues to provide an excellent PE/exercise regime and options for engaging in PE/exercise during the day, evening and at weekends. These options included multiple teams covering cricket, football, running, badminton and basketball, as well as standard gym and weights. During this reporting year, weight-loss circuit classes were also introduced. Many of the team sports run as leagues, with enthusiastic participation by both prisoners and the staff managing these events.

6.5.2 By the end of the reporting year, prisoners were engaged in approximately 3.5 hours of personal physical activity each week. This is significantly above the HMPPS benchmark of 2.5 hours per prisoner, per week, and the Board notes that these figures have been achieved despite curtailments due to staff redeployment or regime changes necessitated by staff shortages.

6.5.3 The PE department continues to run activities for specific groups within the prisoner population, including those involved with the substance misuse team, the LGBTQ+ community and extended options for older prisoners, including yoga sessions. Indeed, the reporting period saw the introduction of walking football sessions aimed at older prisoners. These have proved extremely popular and have increased the time out of cells for those who might not otherwise bother with any activity. The sessions run exclusively for the ISP (Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners) population are very well received and give this group an opportunity to talk about their concerns with others in a similar position while exercising.

6.5.4 The Board is also pleased to note the continuing strong links between PE, healthcare and education, which have enabled the provision to be tailored to the needs of the prisoners. The provision of accredited courses in vocational qualifications such as first aid, diet and nutrition and healthy living, and the PE orderlies being registered for peer monitoring qualifications are also to be applauded. Equally, the running of specific events in support of local charities is an extremely positive move, which enhances the prisoners' sense of contribution and the prison's reputation in the local community.

6.5.5 The repair and replacement of gym equipment continues to be inadequate due to insufficient funding.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 A Phoenix Futures team continues to provide prisoner wellbeing services in addition to their support for prisoners with substance misuse issues. They continue to see all new arrivals to the prison, to undertake a full assessment of substance misuse, and are available to all prisoners by self-referral. In addition to four practitioners working closely with prisoners on a one-to-one basis, their work also covers providing brief interventions and welfare checks, as needed by prisoners or the prison. They also run a support group in A wing, the recovery wing, and meetings for Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. As at the end of the reporting year, they were providing support for over 20% of the prison population, and they work with probation staffs in the community. The Board is pleased to note the increasing visibility of the services offered by this recovery and wellbeing team and their responsiveness to support the needs of the prisoner population, which has been very positively received.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 The Board is pleased to see the introduction of peer-led workshops in the evenings, with activities ranging from chapel and quizzes through to snooker and cribbage.

6.7.2 The Board is also pleased to note the two activities days that have been organised, where 150 prisoners at each event are encouraged to share their skills and talents with other prisoners. This brings a significant level of achievement to those demonstrating their skills, and presents other prisoners with potential routes for personal development.

6.7.3 The Board is also pleased to note that there are a significant number of artistic submissions (paintings, poetry, plays, songs, sculptures, etc.) to the Koestler trust, a charity that promotes arts in prisons, with 60 awards made, including one platinum and three gold.

6.7.4 Prisoners were also able to benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities including the Mother's Union-run workshops on positive relationships, and many other individuals providing skills instruction.

6.7.5 In summary, there are a vast range of opportunities for soft skills at HMP Littlehey, which is a huge benefit to the prison population.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 HMIP conducted an unannounced inspection of HMP Littlehey during the period 4-14 September 2023, and an Ofsted inspection was undertaken as part of it. Overall, Ofsted found that the provision of learning and skill was mixed and assessed it as 'requiring improvement'.

7.1.2 One of the key educational concerns raised by Ofsted was that there was insufficient provision of English, maths and English for speakers of other languages to meet the need of the population. The Board is pleased to note that the prison was planning to double the provision of maths classes during the financial year, beginning in April 2024, and more than double the provision of English classes. The Board also acknowledges the continuing supportive role played by the Shannon Trust and the increase in its mentor numbers, from 27 in the last reporting period to 40 in this, with the commensurate increase in the number of prisoners being supported with basic English and maths.

7.1.3 The other key Ofsted concern was that the prison needed a reading strategy to support literacy, based on a meaningful assessment of need among the prison population. The prison had followed the Ministry of Justice guidance and had only been assessing inductees. However, it accepted the Ofsted comments, and the Board is pleased to note that the number of assessments has risen from 87 at the time of the Ofsted inspection to almost 500 by the end of this reporting period.

7.1.4 The library provision during this reporting year has been sporadic: the Woodlands library has always been available, but the Lakeside library has sometimes been closed, due to inadequate staff resources. All wings have the opportunity to visit the library, and it continues to provide outreach services so that prisoners can access all library resources. The library also timetables sessions for the Shannon Trust; for quiet time when prisoners can conduct their own research; education for those on courses; and games. All wings also have small libraries.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 At the end of the previous reporting period, 300 prisoners had no assigned activity for any part of the day. The Board is pleased to note that this had fallen to 177 by the time of the Ofsted inspection and to below 150 by the end of the reporting period.

7.2.2 The Board also notes that the number of prisoners assigned to workshops is still over 250, with an attendance rate of over 95%.

7.2.3 The Board, once again, notes the excellent work carried out at HMP Littlehey by the Fine Cell Work charity (which creates handmade products in British prisons) and their continued support of prisoners involved in this work following their release. The exceptional work completed by prisoners employed by Fine Cell, either in their workshop or via in-cell work, is truly admirable and something they should be very proud of.

7.2.4 However, the Board is very disappointed to note that the roof of the workshops' building was leaking for the whole of the reporting period, without any clear plan to repair or replace it.

7.2.5 The Board is pleased to see the introduction and development of the CRED (clean, rehabilitative, enabling and decent) team to support the work of Gov Facilities Services Limited (GFSL). The team will have an eventual size of 16 and is an excellent way of speeding up small repairs and improvements at minimum cost, while allowing some prisoners to develop or maintain skills and gain a sense of contributing to their community.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 One of the key concerns in from the HMIP inspection was that contact between offender managers was mostly task-driven and did not consistently support sentence progression and risk management. However, the Board is pleased to note that single points of contact (SPOC) are being developed for specific wings to support sentence progression. A job specification is being developed for the SPOCs and prisoners to raise awareness of the support available. Also, two new offender management unit (OMU) orderlies have been appointed attend inductions weekly to speak with all new receptions about the role of the OMU.

7.3.2 The Board is pleased to see that progress on OASys reports has continued to improve, with prisoners arriving at HMP Littlehey receiving an OASys assessment shortly after. This includes both those who have arrived from other prisons without an assessment and those arriving following initial sentencing. In addition, the Board acknowledges the progress made in clearing the backlog of OASys reports for those prisoners already at HMP Littlehey.

7.3.3 The Board is pleased to see that the prison has met its targets for offender behaviour programmes, delivering 57 Horizon courses, against a target of 54, and 16 Kaizen courses, against a target of 14. The Board is also pleased to see that staff are being extremely flexible in the delivery of courses to meet prisoner release dates, and programme needs assessments (PNA) are keeping pace with requirement. This is despite of the fact there had been difficulties brought about by staff shortages.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 The Board is pleased to see the continued effective working relationship that has developed between the prison and Invisible Walls, which took over the management of visits in October 2022, although there are sometimes discrepancies about the standard of dress required from visitors.

7.4.2 The continuing attention being given to providing social visits days for specific groups in the prison is also to be commended. Examples of this are the family days run for ISPs (indeterminate sentence prisoners) in the autumn and those run for one adult only and the one child visits, all of which were well received by prisoners and their families.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 As in previous years, HMP Littlehey continues to release significant numbers of prisoners directly into the community, despite it being a training rather than a resettlement prison. During the reporting year, the Board sadly notes that this number has risen again, after the downward trend noted in last year's report, with 190 prisoners released in the 12 months up to 31 January 2024 compared with 164

the previous year (source: the OMU).

7.5.2 The Board is also very encouraged that no prisoners were released to transient accommodation or without accommodation. The performance hub indicated that some prisoners were, but back-checking with Delius with the pre-release prison service officer showed that all prisoners had allocated accommodation by the time they arrived at their local councils.

7.5.3 The Board is pleased to note that the pre-release planning continues to be very thorough, with excellent links between the OMU staff and outside agencies, resulting in prisoners getting as good a start as can reasonably be expected.

8. The work of the IMB

8.1.1 The period began with eight Board members, five of whom left during the year. Two new members were recruited during the early part of the year, but one subsequently dropped out and, by the summer, one member had taken sabbatical. The effective membership was, therefore, three for much of the year and at the end of the period. This is against an establishment of 16.

8.1.2 Another recruitment campaign was run during the reporting period but didn't result in any further appointments, and the Board fails to understand why the recruitment process needs to be done in discrete campaigns and is not continually operating. It does not appear to be managed to provide the much-needed extra numbers at the coalface. Equally, the communication regarding membership of interview panels, their make-up and the outcome of candidate interviews has been both inappropriate and unsatisfactory.

8.1.3 The number of changes in Board personnel and the small number of active and trained members during much of the reporting year has affected the level of monitoring. This situation is unlikely to change until the number of Board members increases and the Board stabilises. Also, with only three members, the Board is unable to adequately cover all aspects of prison life and struggles to produce an annual report that addresses all of the identified areas. If Boards are to continue with such small numbers, consideration needs to be given to the required reporting and monitoring processes to ensure that the minimum statutory requirements are met.

8.1.4 During the reporting year, the Board held 11 Board Meetings. For monitoring purposes, it attended the CSU every week when prisoners were in situ and conducted weekly sessions to answer prisoner applications to the Board. Monitoring visits were also conducted regularly until summer, when numbers required these to become more ad hoc and thematic. Selected prison meetings were observed, such as for diversity and inclusion, reducing reoffending, prison council and social visits, in addition to subject-specific forums. Prison management meetings were also monitored on an ad hoc basis.

8.1.5 The Board is a good team, with varied backgrounds and a range of complementary skills and strengths. It enjoys generally good relations with prisoners and staff, evidenced by the number of people who approach Board members when they are in the prison.

Board statistics

Board Statistics	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	4*
Total number of visits to the establishment	319
Total number of segregation reviews observed	202

*There are four nominal members of the Board, but one is long-term absence, leaving an effective membership of three.

Applications to the IMB

8.1.6 IMB applications decreased marginally from 268 to 256, the majority of these being answered by letter from the IMB office, with meetings held with prisoners to clarify issues when needed. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of these applications are about matters that have not already been submitted through the internal complaints process, or where a prisoner is attempting to change an operational decision. Also, it should be noted that 38 of these applications were from one prisoner.

8.1.7 The significant decrease in the number of applications relating to accommodation were the result of improvements to the heating system after the major failures during the previous reporting period. But problems with hot water and heating remain.

8.1.8 From January 2023, the IMB was no longer part of the confidential access process.

8.1.9 Property complaints to the IMB, especially regarding other prisons, have increased again. This is a major issue, which HMPPS still needs to adequately address.

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year 2023	Current reporting year 2024
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	52	19
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	7	16
C	Equality	9	1
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	22	21
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	24	10
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	6	9
F	Food and kitchens	9	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	8	17
H1	Property within this establishment	13	26
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	22	37
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	10	9
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	7	9
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	21	28
K	Transfers	5	10
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	31	31
	Confidential Access	22	0
	No show	N/A	
Total number of applications		268	256

Annex A

Service providers

Service	Provider
Dental care	Prisoner Centred Dental Care
Diversity and Inclusion	Zahid Mubarak Trust (ZMT)
Education	People Plus CF03
Library	Suffolk Libraries
Healthcare, including mental health	Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Pharmacy	Lloyds Pharmacy
Prisoner support	Samaritans Prison Fellowship Peace Partners Relate Shannon Trust Sue Ryder Christians against Poverty Mothers' Union
Resettlement	Probation Service
Social care	Cambridgeshire County Council
Substance misuse programmes	Phoenix Futures Recovery & Wellbeing Team
Visitors' centre and hall	Invisible Walls (a G4S company)



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