



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Wormwood Scrubs

**For reporting year
1 June 2023 to 31 May 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 Wormwood Scrubs is a category B (which has the second highest level of security, behind category A), public-sector local and designated resettlement prison for men, built mainly between 1875 and 1891. Located in a densely populated area of Hammersmith, in London, the prison backs onto the large, open area of Wormwood Scrubs and is vulnerable to attempts to deliver banned substances and items to the prison by means of drones and items being thrown over the walls.

The prison accepts sentenced and remand prisoners over the age of 21 and young remand adults aged 18-21. Young adults are placed on all wings. As a resettlement prison, HMP Wormwood Scrubs also accepts prisoners for the last 12 weeks of their sentence. Approximately 30% of men are foreign national prisoners. Many prisoners stay for relatively short periods and may leave and return repeatedly. The proportion of remand prisoners was around 50% during the reporting year, but can be as high as 70%.

Although classified as a local prison, under a temporary arrangement, it receives prisoners from St Albans Crown Court and those redirected from HMP Bedford, as well as from the local area. This has increased the number of elderly prisoners, including those sentenced for historic sex offences. This year, HMP Wormwood Scrubs has also taken an increased number of high-risk prisoners transferred or redirected from HMP Wandsworth and HMP Pentonville.

The prison has five main residential wings, with only D and E wings having single-cell accommodation. Most prisoners are housed in double cells originally built for one occupant. The Conibeere unit (CBU) accommodates prisoners requiring assessment and support with substance misuse issues. There is a residential healthcare unit, plus a care and separation unit, or CSU, where men are segregated.

The number of prisoners being held increased over the reporting year due to space and other pressures in the wider prison and criminal justice systems. By the second half of the reporting year, the prison was consistently running near its operational capacity of 1280¹.

¹ This is the safe overcrowding figure agreed with the local prisons group director above the certified normal accommodation (the number of prisoners who can be accommodated without overcrowding) as the maximum of prisoners allowed.

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

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- The average monthly prison population increased by more than 5% compared with the previous reporting year. While monthly figures varied, for parts of the year, the prison was running near operational capacity.
- Figures for recorded violence and self-harm remained lower, overall, than in comparator reception prisons (see 4.3), but there was a markedly upward trend in the number of recorded incidents of violence (see definition below) during the last quarter of the reporting year.
- The Board has ongoing concerns about the levels of availability of illicit substances in the prison. The number of positive drugs tests compares unfavourably with other London prisons.
- The Board remains concerned about the inconsistent wearing of body worn video cameras (BWVCs) by prison officers to record use of force incidents, despite this being a requirement.

Fair and humane treatment

- Outdated buildings and breakdowns of critical infrastructure such as cell bell systems and lifts adversely impacted the fair and humane treatment of prisoners.
- The Board remains concerned about prisoners with complex and severe mental health issues, who require further assessment and/or clinical care in the healthcare unit, having to remain in the CSU because of the lack of space in the healthcare unit (H3).
- Despite the introduction of the national Prisoners' Property Policy Framework in September 2022, the Board received more than double the number of complaints in the reporting year about property being lost during transfer or in another facility, and more than a third more complaints about property held in the establishment.

Health and wellbeing

- While considerable progress appears to have been made towards the implementation of the New Model of Care (see section 6), an unacceptable number of routine healthcare appointments and therapeutic sessions were not attended by prisoners or were cancelled by the prison due to a lack of prison officer availability.
- While some improvements have been made, prisoners requiring secure mental health care are still waiting too long for assessment and transfer to external healthcare facilities, and targets were still not being met.
- The Board has seen welcome progress in improving out-of-cell opportunities for prisoners, but those not in employment or education can still spend 22 or more hours a day locked in their cell, and time out of cell is inconsistent.

Progression and resettlement.

- The prison has taken welcome steps to improve the number of prisoners engaged in suitable and varied work, education and training, but many prisoners still have limited access to the library, training and education off the wing.
- While some improvements appear to have been made in education, particularly in the second half of the year, unlocking for work, education and other off-wing

activities was inconsistent because of the lack of escorting prison staff, which affected attendance.

- Overall, in the Board's view, resettlement support and preparation for prisoners leaving custody improved, but some gaps in provision remained, particularly for remand prisoners. Shortages of staff adversely affected probation and other offender management services and impacted communication with prisoners and access to timely assistance and communication. There was a marked increase in applications (prisoners' written submissions) to the Board relating to sentence management this reporting year.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- What further support will the Minister provide to rectify issues with the antiquated buildings and infrastructure to improve living conditions and safety in the prison?
- What support can be provided to help remand prisoners with release planning?
- What further steps is the Minister considering with a view to ensuring an improvement in assessment and transfer times to hospital for those requiring specialist mental health facilities?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- What further support will the Prison Service provide to rectify issues with the antiquated buildings and infrastructure to improve living conditions and safety in the prison?
- What further support can be provided to ensure that the prison has adequate resources to deliver an effective and consistent key worker scheme?
- Complaints about lost property markedly increased this year, despite the introduction of the national Prisoners' Property Policy Framework. What will the Prison Service do to improve the situation?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- What action can be taken to monitor and improve the consistency of adequate time out of cell for all prisoners?
- What further steps will be taken to accurately monitor and reduce the number of therapy and healthcare sessions not attended because of the lack of prison staff (see section 6)?
- What plans are in place to address and reduce the availability of illicit substances in the prison?
- Are there any plans to allow more flexibility for prisoners to mix outside their wing groups (see 7.1) for education and training?

3.3 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister		
What resources will the Minister make immediately available to this prison to mitigate the impacts of overcrowding?	There is no extra finding funding available to support increased services or staffing levels at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. Capacity pressures have affected the wider prison estate. Staffing levels at the prison have improved.	Despite improved staffing levels on paper, lack of prison staff is still given as the reason for the cancellation of many healthcare appointments and other timetabled activities.
What resources will the Minister make immediately available to this prison to improve the fabric of the prison?	Investment is being made in the prison infrastructure, but demands are much greater than the available funding.	A limited programme of refurbishment continues, but the problems largely remain.
Can the Minister provide confirmation that adequate funding for Citizens Advice will be provided in future years?	Citizens Advice work with their own funding, but the prison acknowledges that the service is insufficient to meet demand and will continue to explore with them how to increase their service.	At present, the service in the prison relies on one part-time individual and is extremely oversubscribed.
What plans are in place to coordinate with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure there is adequate provision for prisoners with acute mental health needs?	It is recognised that prisoners who meet the threshold for detention under the Mental Health Act (MHA) experience delays in accessing the specialist care and treatment they need. Work is being undertaken to improve oversight and delivery.	There have been some improvements in transfer times, but they remain well below target.
To the Prison Service		
What is being done to improve the recruitment, turnover and retention of staff?	There is no additional funding available to support the increased population, but staffing and sickness levels have improved, which has reduced gaps that impacted the daily running of regime.	See above.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The average monthly prisoner population (1253) was more than 5% higher than last year (1190). Safety data given below relies largely on information supplied by the prison and is inevitably a snapshot of a complex picture. Figures can be distorted by individuals involved in multiple incidents, sometimes within a short period, and by variations in the consistency of recording by the prison. Where given, comparisons with other data should be read with some caution accordingly.

4.1 Reception and induction

The prison continued to make changes to reception and induction procedures to improve information capture in a prisoner's early days in HMP Wormwood Scrubs. Risk assessments on entry are now carried out by a nurse, supported by a first-night interview (see section 6).

A group of prisoners, including a Listener (a prisoner trained by the Samaritans to provide peer support), work in the reception area. They organise and provide food, clothing and supplies to prisoners on arrival, provide a peer contact and keep the reception areas clean and tidy. A new 'Here to Help' peer support and mentoring scheme across the prison helps prisoners with information and provides useful training for the mentors, who can work towards a City & Guilds mentoring qualification.

The first night centre (FNC) is used for the early stages of induction, after which most prisoners go to B wing. Pressures within the wider prison system and problems at HMP Wandsworth resulted in HMP Wormwood Scrubs accepting more high-risk prisoners and an increased frequency of very late arrivals (some after the prison had entered night state). This is when fewer staff are on duty, making risk assessments by healthcare staff and first-night processes more difficult and exacerbating issues with property on arrival. Of 35 beds in the FNC, 15 are in dormitories, which causes problems when there is little free space and new arrivals require single-cell accommodation, particularly if they arrive late.

A review of induction processes is ongoing. Among other changes, induction for B wing has been moved into the education department, and education induction has been combined with an introduction to prison life delivered by peer supporters. An annual survey by the prison of a small sample of prisoners (135) echoed reports to the Board that prisoners were happier this year with the information given to them on arrival. Prisoners have, however, complained to the Board more frequently about long delays in approving PINs (approved phone numbers used to call outside the prison) and a lack of menu choices in the early days; there have also been significantly more complaints to the Board about property lost or delayed in transit to the prison (see 5.8).

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The Board notes with sadness that there were six deaths in custody (including one in hospital) during this reporting year: two appear to have been due to natural causes, two appear to have been self-inflicted (one of which appears to have been related to substance misuse) and two prisoners died in the community shortly after release.

Safety data is captured by the prison and reviewed in monthly meetings. Recorded self-harm (mostly cuts and scratches) tracked lower over the reporting year, reversing an upward trend seen since the pandemic (498 last year, 323 this year). However, some

inconsistencies in data suggest that self-harm incidents are not consistently recorded by staff, with the true figures likely to be higher. Unlike in the previous reporting year, where there were spikes largely in the winter months, a downward trend, starting in the second quarter, continued, albeit reversing in April, despite an uptick in other safety data (see graph, below).

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) opened during the reporting year fell to 521 (762 in the previous reporting year). Most were opened in reception, reflecting positive changes to reception screening and early days processes (see above). This mirrors the trend in self-harm in the period to April 2024. There was, however, an overall upward trend in ACCTs in the last quarter (162), as there was last year (205).

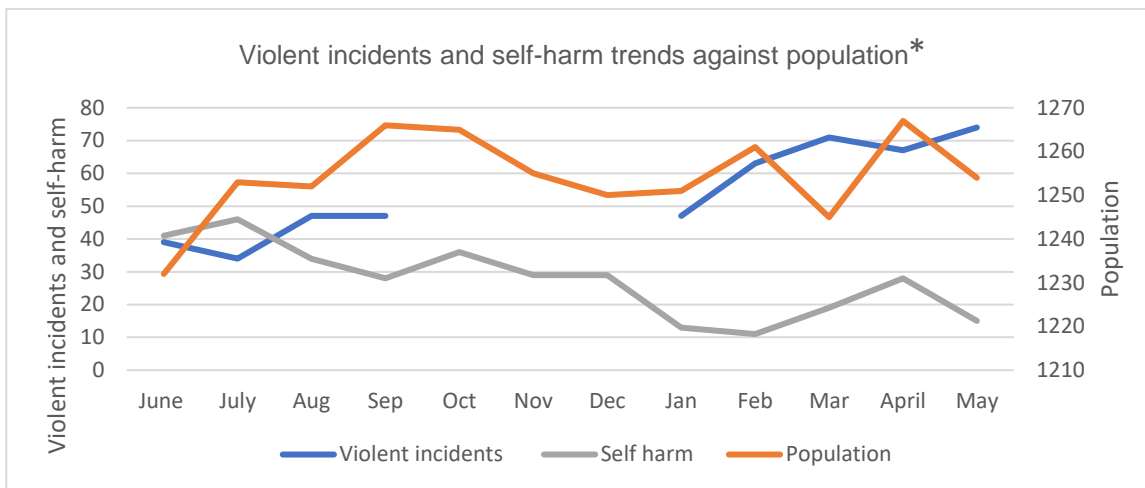
The Samaritans, who train prisoners to be Listeners and provide a separate service to prisoners by free phone, are well-supported and valued in the prison. Listeners are available in reception and in the FNC, as well as on the residential wings, supplemented by Here to Help mentors. The main concerns logged by Listeners were, as last year, about mental health and family, as well as issues with staff relationships and a lack of regime.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction

The prison continued its violence reduction strategy of managing prisoners in wing and landing cohorts so that a group of prisoners on one wing will have no contact with prisoners on another. The management team considers this a key reason for maintaining levels of reported violence lower than comparator reception prisons, despite the considerable challenges and pressures the prison has faced this year (but see 7.1).

Among other measures, the prison addresses violence through prison safety representatives on the wings, intelligence-led interventions and weapons seizures, and quarterly weapons amnesties. Monthly meetings review the numbers and trends of violent incidents, analyse individual serious violent incidents (see definition below), and record details of assaults on staff.

Mental health issues are seen by the prison as significant drivers of violence towards staff. Violent incidents involving staff also increase staff sickness rates and create additional pressures on the remaining staff, particularly where staffing generally is already stretched. With fewer options to move prisoners around within the prison and into the wider estate because of lack of free space, prison staff had to work very hard to accommodate prisoners safely as the intake of challenging prisoners grew and a lack of spare capacity became increasingly the norm.



*Defined as assaults on staff, sexual assaults, fights, assaults on prisoners, attempted assaults, restraint and guiding holds. Source: HMP Wormwood Scrubs. Date range: 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024

As the graph above shows, although the Board has not been able to obtain a complete set of comparable data for recorded violent incidents in the second quarter of the reporting year (September to December), there was a sustained upward trend in recorded violence in the last quarter, with upswings recorded in periods following those where population was at its highest.

Most incidents of recorded violence were lower level use, by staff, of restraints and guiding holds because of resistance or non-compliance.

Within these figures, over the whole reporting year, assaults by prisoners on staff (mostly punching and hitting) averaged approximately ten a month (lower than last year's monthly average of 12). But the marked upward trend in total recorded incidents from March 2024, shown above, includes a similar trend in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and prisoner-on-staff assaults in the last quarter of the reporting year (see also 4.4. and 4.5, below).

The prison attributes the increases to a spike in fights between prisoners in May and June to gang issues and frustrations arising from pressures on space and regime. The prison also puts it down to the challenge of managing high-risk prisoners, as well as violence associated with mental health problems in a prison running at near capacity for sustained periods.

Responses to an annual safety survey of prisoners' perceptions around safety issues, carried out by the prison in December, were generally more positive than the year before, but 43% of 486 respondents reported feeling unsafe, the key reason being violence from others (see 3.1). This is consistent with reports from prisoners to the Board that internal dynamics within some 'household' groups can impact negatively on some prisoners' perceptions of their safety (particularly those with vulnerabilities) and that staff are sometimes not seen as sufficiently proactive, caring or experienced to manage this effectively.

Most violent incidents occur between 9am and 12 noon and between 4pm and 5pm, when medication is collected and regime ends. A proportionally higher number of incidents involve prisoners who are aged 22-33, a group also recorded as having a proportionally higher number of ACCTs and most likely to be segregated.

4.4 Use of force (UoF)

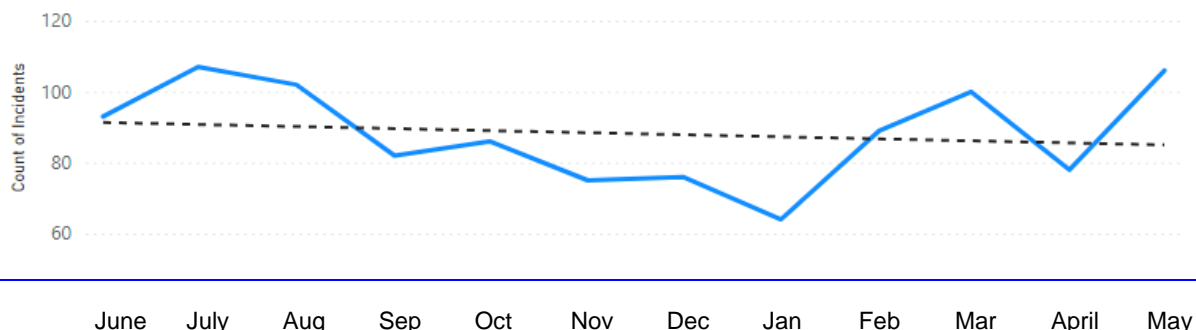
Incidents of force (defined as the planned and unplanned use of guiding holds, restraints, batons, PAVA incapacitant spray, rigid-bar handcuffs or pain-inducing techniques) are reviewed at a monthly UoF meeting. They are also evaluated weekly by a Governor, a Prison Officers' Association representative, the safety manager and the UoF coordinator. Where available, evidence reviewed includes body worn video camera (BWVC) footage and CCTV footage.

There has been some increase in the daily collection of BWVCs. However, the prison accepts that, despite being a uniform and policy requirement, both collection and active use of BWVCs to record incidents remain inconsistent, even though the prison has repeatedly attempted to improve this. There are many instances where BWVCs are not switched on in UoF events. Ongoing upgrades to CCTV systems have ensured that most cameras are now digital.

A safety intervention meeting (SIM) takes place weekly, with representatives from most departments and wings of the prison, including healthcare, and is observed by a member of the Board where possible. The meeting reviews the prisoners of most concern. This includes those on a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP), those assessed as most likely to self-harm, complex individuals who pose a risk of violence or significant disorder, self-isolating men, those on constant watch, those refusing food, transgender prisoners and men on an ACCTs. Violent incidents, many of which will have triggered a UoF incident, are noted and discussed.

Use of force trend: date range is 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024

Total Reported Incidents by Year and Month



Recorded incidents of UoF (see definition, above). Source: HMP Wormwood Scrubs

There were 945 UoF incidents recorded over the reporting year (compared with 856 in the previous reporting year), a monthly average of 79 (71 last year), mostly at lower levels (guiding holds and restraint). An uptick in the last quarter of the reporting year (433 incidents recorded between January and May 2024) mirrors other violence figures. However, the overall trend was downwards, as the graph above shows, and the figures for the last quarter were still lower than those of comparator London local prisons such as HMP Pentonville and HMP Wandsworth. As with other data, the figures should be seen in the context of increases in the prison population (see 4.3).

The main reasons recorded for UoF were assaults on staff, assaults by prisoners on other prisoners and non-compliance in refusing to relocate. Very few young adults (aged 18-21) were involved in UoF incidents.

More staff are now trained in the use of PAVA incapacitant spray but, as at the end of the reporting period, it had not been used in the prison.

Incidents of UoF (see definition, above) against percentage ethnicity of prison population

Ethnicity	% of all recorded UoF incidents	% ethnicity of prison population
Asian/Asian British	9	13
Black/black British	33	26
Mixed race	8	6
White	31	40
Other	7	6
Unknown	14	10

Date range: 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024. Figures rounded. Source: HMP Wormwood Scrubs

The prison population changes daily, so precise figures are difficult for the Board to obtain. However, from those available, there appears to have been a 10% reduction in the disproportion of recorded UoF incidents involving black prisoners, compared with their percentage population in the prison this reporting year, a figure changed by less than 2%. This is, on the face of it, encouraging, although the reasons are unclear.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The geography of the prison makes some areas vulnerable to drones and items being thrown over the walls. Drugs and other illicit items, such as mobile phones and weapons, drive violence, gang issues and debt (obligations which include, but are not restricted to, financial debt) and significantly affect the safety, health and wellbeing of prisoners.

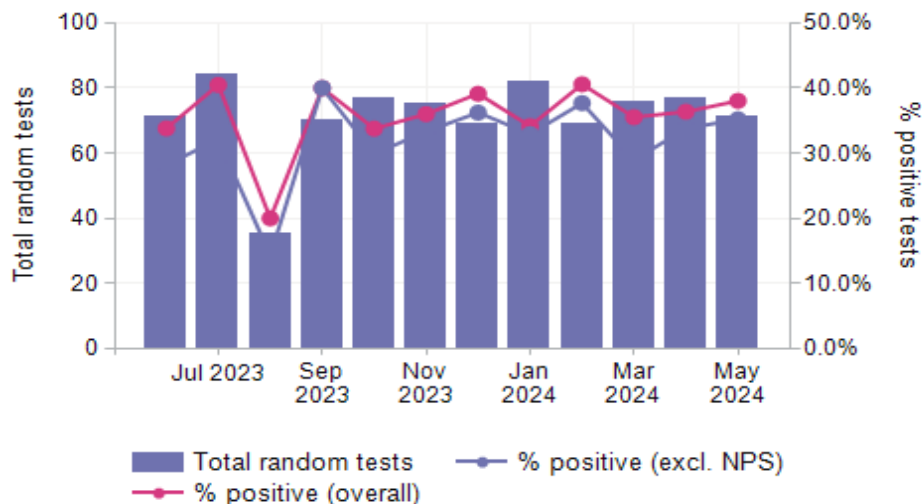
Netting and a continuing programme of installing new secure windows has helped limit the successful delivery of items by drone. However, advances in drone technology and the high value of payloads have made attempts more worthwhile and disruption and interception harder. Detected activity fluctuates (and will not represent the true extent of attempts) but, as with other figures, there was an upward trend in the last two quarters of the reporting year, from a low point over the Christmas period, unsurprisingly mirroring an uptick in drugs detected on testing (see below), and a peak in drugs' finds in April.

Other measures include body and airport-style scanning, sniffer dogs and searches and interceptions based on intelligence. However, the Board has observed that the use of scanners at the gate and in reception has been very inconsistent, which the prison attributes to staffing issues.

There have been some productive illicit items interventions and quarterly weapons amnesties, but the extent of finds and surrendered items exposes the tip of a much larger and concerning problem, in the Board's view.

Random mandatory drug testing (MDT) was carried out throughout the reporting year, although numbers tested were lower in August due to a lack of staff. There were confirmed positive findings in around 35% of tests, which is higher than in comparator prisons (see above), and little changed from the last reporting year (when findings ranged between 30% and 45%). An uptick in the trend during the last quarter of the reporting year coincided with a spike in recorded drone activity, some large drugs' finds and an uptick in violence figures (see 4.3).

MDT findings and trends



Date range: 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024. Source: HMP Wormwood Scrubs

The most detected illicit drugs were cannabis (around 20% of samples) and new psychoactive substances, or NPS (around 8.5%), which are designed to mimic illicit drugs such as cannabis and cocaine. The Board has concerns that a level of drug use may be becoming normalised, and monitoring has suggested that it is not consistently confronted or addressed by staff.

The prison plans to review staff training and education around the impact of substance misuse and review education and other information given to prisoners around the dangers of substance abuse in tandem with Forward Trust, a charity that helps people with drug and alcohol dependence (see 6.6). Prisoners are also encouraged to apply to the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) landing on D wing, which requires regular voluntary testing for compliance by Forward Trust. The Board understands that the prison plans to increase the frequency and regularity of searching and airport-style and body scanning of prisoners, staff and other visitors to both intercept and deter attempts to bring drugs and other illicit material into the prison.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Accommodation

Prisoners are accommodated in five residential wings, the Conibeere unit (CBU), a healthcare unit (H3) and the CSU. The three largest residential wings have shared cells with bunk beds. D and E wings have single-occupancy cells. Four wings each have a Disability Discrimination Act-approved cell for wheelchair users on the lowest floor and there are additional single cells on the lowest landing of D wing that have had rails installed for wheelchair users. The prison also plans to enlarge the door and install a ramp and rails in a shower unit if funding is secured. However, the Board remains of the view that the prison's structure is fundamentally unsuitable for the needs of wheelchair users.

The last major overhaul of the prison infrastructure was in 1994, with the 25-year life expectancy now exceeded. The prison's works department prioritises quick repairs of damage to cells, maximising occupancy on the wings where possible. However, the Board frequently receives reports of vandalism and other damage taking days or weeks to mend, adding to other problems such as roof leaks and intermittent heating, electrical and other critical failures.

The Board's observations suggest that capacity pressures have affected the prison's ability to carry out routine maintenance, as it is harder to decant prisoners to alternative accommodation when the prison is full. Nevertheless, the prison has been able to continue a programme of improvements, including the replacement of metal beds with wooden beds, some shower upgrades and a programme of painting, including high-rise painting, to the tops of the wings. While some outside areas of the prison are tidy and colourfully planted, many areas accessed or overlooked by prisoners are bleak and some are perennially unkempt, with weeds and litter, including food debris.

Rodents and other vermin are an ongoing issue and cause damage to infrastructure (such as, for example, by chewing through cabling), as well as being a health hazard. A chronic mouse infestation in the property storage area of the prison in February 2024 became so severe that the whole area required emptying and refurbishment.

Fire alarm systems and cell bells depend on outdated equipment, which is kept operational through pragmatic use of modified parts and workarounds. Breakdown has been a continuing issue on all wings, posing risks to prisoners and staff. By the end of the reporting year, work was, at last, starting on the installation of a new cell bell system, initially in the CSU but intended to cover all wings.

Lift breakdowns remain a recurring problem, with all lifts well beyond their expected life. Replacement of the lifts to H3 and the FNC and A wing was approved, but installation has been dogged by delays and other lifts are also frequently out of order. Prisoners have been observed carrying loaded trolleys of food and laundry up and down stairways. There have also been reports of wheelchair users struggling to move around the prison and access activities and scheduled appointments and of having to be carried because working lifts are not available.

The prison laundry was out of action several times during the reporting year, due to faulty and outdated equipment, and kit was sourced from other prisons as a stopgap. As well as the impact on supplies, the prison lost money, because it was unable to supply a

contracted laundry service to other prisons, and the laundry workshop for prisoners had to be closed.

Clothing

Prisoners should be provided with at least two fresh clothing kits weekly and most can do a certain amount of their own laundry on the wings. Clothing and other articles frequently go missing or are thrown away by prisoners, and the prison has tried to improve this by providing bins to collect unwanted items. The prison itself reported fewer complaints about kit than last year, but an increased number of applications to the Board suggests that provision is patchy and we receive regular complaints that the supply of clean clothing and towels is not consistent.

Food

The Board is pleased to report that the prison has made considerable efforts to improve the quality and delivery of food in the reporting year.

The kitchen generally now has a full complement of employees – an achievement compared with previous years – but there are often problems in the afternoons and on Sundays, as a lack of staff means prisoners are not always unlocked to work in the kitchen. The kitchen is seen as a desirable job by prisoners but does not provide a qualification or certification at present.

Among other improvements, the kitchen has worked on expanding the range, quality and variety of food it can produce and now prepares food one day in advance, compared with the previous three days, and has a working bakery. Results of an annual food survey by the prison indicated that prisoners felt that quality had improved, but three-quarters of respondents felt that portion sizes were not sufficient. This is a recurring complaint, confirming observations by members of the Board. Food served cold often looks unappetising and is often seen abandoned, entirely uneaten. Those who can afford it rely on top-up purchases of items from the prison, although these are supplied at a cost far higher than supermarket rates.

The prison moved to serving a hot meal in the evening at the beginning of the reporting year, a popular change. Food is still delivered to the door in foil cartons and eaten in cell. Despite efforts by the kitchen to ensure all meals ordered are sent out, prisoners still regularly complain that they often do not receive special diets or their menu choice when food is handed out on the wing.

More than 400 hot halal meals were delivered over Ramadan (the highest number ever), organised through the chaplaincy and supported by donations from the local community.

5.2 Segregation

The CSU has 18 cells. Cells are frequently out of use because of 'dirty protests', deliberate damage or intentional flooding. The use of special accommodation (where items such as furniture, bedding and sanitation are removed in the interests of safety) is very low, and it was not used during the reporting year.

Prisoners aged 20-29 years old are consistently the largest age group held in the CSU. As in previous reporting years, a higher proportion of black prisoners were segregated (an average of over 40% of segregated prisoners) than their numbers in the prison overall (26%) – see section 4.5.

Most prisoners stay in the CSU for seven to 10 days. A small number exceeded 42 days, the limit allowed without external authorisation (one stayed more than 100 days),

but this is extremely unusual. The number of prisoners segregated began to rise towards the end of the reporting year, reflecting higher levels of violence and disruption on the wings (see 4.3).

The unit regularly holds prisoner with challenging and volatile behaviour, who are often noisy and abusive to staff, and the work requires staff to demonstrate high levels of patience, compassion and care towards those in their charge. The full-time CSU Governor transferred at the end of the previous reporting year and was replaced with a Governor working two days a week. However, the custody manager (CM), who has been in post for several years, has provided continuity and strong leadership to the unit.

Separation monitoring and review group (SMARG) meetings are held quarterly throughout the year and are observed by the Board. Segregated prisoners are visited daily by a Governor, a healthcare representative and a member of the chaplaincy team. Members of the Board speak to prisoners in the CSU on a regular basis. Good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews (where it is determined if a prisoner who has been segregated due to disruptive behaviour should remain segregated) were monitored by Board members regularly.

At times, the unit has been short staffed, with officers from elsewhere in the prison filling the gaps, despite not having the training required for those working in the CSU. Staff shortages have also occasionally contributed to prisoners complaining about the slow response time to cell bells, and bells being rung repeatedly.

The CM conducts regular checks of paperwork but acknowledges that due to staff shortage and inexperience, daily records are not always checked and monitored effectively. Initial healthcare checks are also not always completed on time.

Prisoners regularly complain about a lack of radios, due to damage or removal by prisoners returning to normal location, despite being replenished regularly. There is a bookcase of donated books, while other books can be ordered and delivered by the prison library. Activity packs are available on the unit. All segregated prisoners are offered daily exercise and showers. However, of the two small exercise yards, the one furnished with outdoor gym equipment has been closed since shortly after installation, when additional security concerns were identified.

Segregated prisoners who refuse to move to a normal location because of violence and/or gang and other issues present a frequent challenge for staff, exacerbated by the continuing pressures on space, particularly of single cells. The Board remains concerned that prisoners with serious mental health issues are remaining in the CSU while waiting for space in H3. Although mental health staff make regular visits to the unit and provide advice and support with care plans and decision making, the Board does not consider the CSU to be suitable for those with severe mental health problems.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

Complaints about staff remain the third highest category of subject area (no change from the previous reporting year). A survey carried out by the prison in February 2024 reported improvements in the number of prisoners who felt they were being treated with respect by staff and had staff to turn to for support with worries and concerns. Although prisoners praised individual staff members for making a real difference to their lives in prison, the Board still heard complaints that some staff did not listen to, or were dismissive of, their concerns. Of the small sample surveyed by the prison, only 38% said they felt treated as individuals (worse than in a survey carried out in 2021).

In the second half of the reporting year, the Board received an increased number of reports by prisoners (including group allegations) about alleged bullying behaviour and unfair treatment by staff. This coincided with an upward trend in recorded violent incidents involving guiding holds and restraint (see 4.3).

The key worker scheme has never been fully implemented, with only 29% of those who undertook a prison questionnaire this year saying they had a key worker. The prison accepts that the scheme has been largely aspirational, and that pressure on resources has meant that it has never worked well but proposes to review it.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Diversity meetings are held on alternate months, with staff and prisoners, and there have been some activities (such as, for example, associated with Black History Month and dedicated library sessions) organised across the year targeted at different groups. Complaints submitted via discrimination incident reporting form (DIRFs) were similar in number to last year (22), but the Board's experience is that many complaints under the general complaints system contain elements related to discrimination, so the number of DIRFs is unlikely to represent the whole picture. A safety review found that, of the 43% of respondents who said they were worried for their safety, 14% attributed this to racism.

There appears to have been a decrease in the disparity between UoF incidents involving black prisoners compared with their percentage population in the prison this year (see 4.4)

While accepting the challenges posed by the prison's structure, the Board remains concerned about provision for elderly prisoners and those with disabilities. The Board has received reports of wheelchair users struggling to move around the prison and access activities and scheduled appointments and of having to be carried because working lifts are not available (see 5.1 and 6.4).

Approximately a third of the residents were foreign national prisoners, some supported by the Home Office for lengthy periods while awaiting deportation or transfer. A foreign national prisoners' co-ordinator was appointed, with HMPPS providing funding on a trial basis in 2022. However, the funding was stopped in spring 2023, at the end of the trial, and has not so far been reinstated, despite achieving a significant drop in the number of foreign national prisoners being detained. The Board expressed the hope in its last report that further funding would be found and hopes to be able to report a more positive picture in its next report.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The highly committed chaplaincy team continues to go from strength to strength, with paid staff numbers increasing this reporting year, including the appointment of a Pagan chaplain. With volunteers, the team now numbers over 90. They provide a hugely valuable source of support and help to prisoners of all faiths and none and have strong links with the community, which can provide continuing support to prisoners after they are released.

All prisoners are visited once a week by a member of the chaplaincy team, while those in the CSU have daily visits. Although wings do not mix and services are scheduled at different times according to location, all prisoners from the main religions can attend weekly communal worship, and a prison survey indicated that prisoners felt that access has improved. The minority religions (generally with fewer than 15 prisoners) can have a weekly service together.

Events are held throughout the year to mark significant dates, and prisoners from C wing (only) can attend an annual carol service held with staff and visitors in the chapel. This year, there was excellent music from the prison choir, a positive arts project started by the chaplaincy team in 2023.

The armed forces charity, SSAFA, works with veterans in the prison and their work is much appreciated by prisoners.

5.6 Incentives schemes

The Board has received far fewer complaints directly about the incentives scheme since it was revised in 2022. However, we continue to receive complaints from prisoners that those on remand (who have additional rights and privileges) are not, in practice, being treated differently to convicted prisoners and that staff do not always acknowledge or seem clear about what their rights are.

5.7 Complaints

A total of 2502 first-level internal complaints (Comp 1s) were submitted by prisoners to the prison in the reporting year, a decrease of 9.7% from last reporting year. Numbers were highest in February (241) and lowest in September (131). Of the 25 complaint subject areas captured monthly, the top four were property (801), residential (448), staff (185) and canteen (162), with the top three being the same as in the previous reporting year.

Last year's communication drive by staff to advertise and explain the complaints system had a positive impact, and more prisoners are reported by the prison to be using it for complaints rather than other requests and applications.

The senior management team carries out quality assurance of 30 randomly selected complaint responses monthly, fed back on an individual basis, and staff have continued to reduce the backlog of complaints. In a survey by the prison, of 135 prisoners asked if they felt complaints were dealt with fairly, 40% said they felt they were, which is significantly better than the figure of 19% in 2022. The on-time response rate also improved, from 63.5% in the previous reporting year, to 67.7% this year. The Board still has some concerns about the timeliness and quality of some responses, but we are pleased to note the improvements.

5.8 Property

Property is consistently the leading reason for complaints to the prison from prisoners (5.7). Many complaints relate to property that has been missing wholly, or in part, for weeks or months, often involving more than one prison. Complaints are often supported with long trails of exasperated and unhappy correspondence relating to attempts by prisoners and their families to locate it.

The Board received almost twice as many applications relating to property in the reporting year compared with last year (98 this year, 52 last year). Of these, the number of applications about property going missing during transfer or lost in another facility almost doubled compared with last year, and more than a third more applications to the Board were made about property issues in the prison (see table in section 8).

The introduction of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, which was supposed to track property more effectively in transit, seems to have made little or no difference, and a great deal of resource is still taken up with trying to locate property that has gone missing somewhere in a system that is still largely dependent on paper records. Some of

the increase will be accounted for by increased prisoner mobility because of pressures in the wider system as more prisoners arrive from courts out of London and on diversion from other establishments; prisoners can be repeatedly moved, released and returned to prison before their property catches up with them.

The prison has plans in place to introduce a new system developed by a member of staff to try to address a longstanding issue of parcels sent in from outside being lost or rejected at the gate. Prisoners will be issued with barcoded labels for family to affix to parcels to improve tracking. This sounds very promising, and the Board will monitor progress.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

From the Board's observations, the provision of healthcare in this reporting period shows a mixed picture. While considerable progress seems to have taken place towards the implementation of the New Model of Care (which aims to deliver a more integrated and coordinated system of healthcare in the prison), lack of prison officer availability has had a worrying impact on routine health appointments, both in and outside of the prison, as well as on the provision of therapeutic sessions.

Practice Plus Group (PPG) is the provider of primary care services, pharmacy and primary mental health care in the prison. Other health services are subcontracted: mental health services are provided by Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust and by the charity, Forward Trust, which delivers psychosocial support for prisoners with substance misuse issues.

A monthly healthcare meeting takes place between the head of healthcare and other health representatives and an assistant Governor. A Board member frequently observes the meeting.

Healthcare now has an additional GP in post and a patient engagement lead to support the healthcare representatives on the wings. There is also a designated release and transfer coordinator to ensure all patients are seen 13 weeks prior to release date to identify ongoing support needs. The Board will monitor the impact of these posts in the next reporting year.

The New Model of Care now has all three elements in place. Firstly, the early days in custody (EDiC) phase ensures that all prisoners are triaged on arrival. The second phase is the planned care multidisciplinary (MDT) meeting, where those with clinical needs identified on arrival are discussed the following day. The third element is the unscheduled care team, which now triages all prisoners' health applications, significantly reducing the waiting time for assessment to within a week.

A new enhanced support service (ESS) team was created during the reporting year for those with a diagnosed personality disorder or with personality difficulties that interfere with their day-to-day functioning and put themselves and/or others at risk of harm. The ESS team is separately funded and consists of a senior mental health nurse, a prison officer and an HMPPS psychologist. The team has a caseload of up to 12 prisoners with the most challenging behaviour. The Board will report on the impact of this service in the next annual report.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 Clinic appointments

Whilst healthcare staff and senior prison managers work collaboratively on ways to mitigate this, cancellation of clinics in the healthcare centre, due to lack of prison officer availability, remains a problem and clearly impacts waiting times (see table below).

While the Board's observations suggested that waiting times for dentistry were not, overall, a cause for concern, the wait to see an optician during the same period sharply increased from February 2024 to about three months.

Data for the cancellation of clinics during the second half of the reporting year

Month	% clinics cancelled
December 2023	28
January 2024	14
February	22
March	11
April	11
May	14

Source: PPG

6.2.2 External hospital appointments

Routine hospital appointments continue to be cancelled, due to a lack of prison officer escort availability. The Board is concerned, however, that the prison and healthcare provider have been unable to provide *agreed* data as to the extent of the problem.

The cancellation of hospital appointments for prison staffing and resource reasons has an adverse impact on prisoners' health and wellbeing, as well as having resource implications for both the prison health service and the NHS of re-arranging appointments. The prison has indicated that work will now be done to review how data is recorded and supplied so that these processes (which rely on an effective partnership between the services) and any issues arising can be properly understood and addressed. The Board acknowledges that capacity pressures on the prison have an inevitable effect on the availability of officers and that the prison's resources have been stretched further by an increased number of escorts requiring three officers because of the risk profile of the prisoner. The Board hopes to be able to provide a far clearer picture in its next report.

6.2.3 Complaints

PPG logs and monitors concerns and complaints received from prisoners and responses are reviewed and approved before they are sent. There has been a significant increase in complaints compared with the last reporting year (figures in brackets), mirrored in an increase in applications to the Board. There has been a marked increase in complaints about medical treatment and appointments, correlating with other issues identified in this report.

Concerns	Medical treatment	Appointments	Medication	Staff behaviour	Mental health	Other	TOTAL
Quarter 1	36	5	17	1	0	1	60
Q2	37	19	12	0	0	6	74
Q3	18	17	12	0	6	11	64
Q4	14	23	7	0	6	21	71
TOTAL	105 (67)	64 (29)	48 (45)	1 (7)	12 (5)	39	269

Source: PPG

6.3 Mental Health

The mental health (MH) team continues to struggle to fill permanent staff vacancies, in common with the wider prison estate, but efforts to recruit continue. Bank hours have been extended (permanent staff working extra hours) and regular agency staff are used.

The Board is pleased to report that the target of completing the initial triaging of patients on arrival, so they could be reviewed by the MDT the next day (see above), was met, as was seeing all urgent referrals within 48 hours. The number of routine referrals seen within the five-day target stands at 77%. A survey of prisoners, carried out by the prison in February, which asked about access to mental health support, indicated that the respondents thought this had become significantly worse.

Mental health staff conduct segregation rounds and attend segregation reviews. In addition, they work closely with the CSU staff to put care plans in place for those with mental health needs and try to ensure that those with severe mental health issues spend the least possible amount of time in the CSU. Additionally, mental health staff provide input to the safety intervention meetings (SIMs) and contribute to decision making for individuals in the CSU through this multi-agency forum.

The healthcare unit (H3) has seen significant increases in the acuity and complexity of both mental health and physical health needs in the last 12 months. This has resulted in waiting lists for a cell in H3 and additional pressure on the mental health in-reach team in managing individuals on the wings and in the CSU whilst they wait. Delays in the local authority completing social care assessments, due to their own long waiting lists, have resulted in social care provision being provided on an informal basis through PPG staff. This seems likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Pressures on bed availability in therapeutic settings outside prison remain a problem, causing delays in transferring prisoners within the 28-day guideline. The Board raised this issue with the Minister last year and was informed that measures were being taken to improve and monitor delivery. There was some improvement in the reporting year, with the average transfer time of 69 days falling to 49 days, but seven patients still waited over 100 days.

6.4 Social care/older prisoners

Older prisoners/social care patients over the age of 55 are automatically placed on the multidisciplinary complex care clinic (MPCCC) list. Assessments are undertaken by the local authority (Hammersmith & Fulham) social care service, but discussions have become ad hoc and assessments delayed due to their pressing workload. There are five physical health beds located on the inpatient unit (H3), with equipment such as air mattresses, hoists and commodes available. Those who require less care but need some support are located, when possible, on the ground floor of D wing, where prison support workers assist with general cleaning and tidying of cells, under a 'buddy' scheme, and they have a supportive group of peers.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

For prisoners without work or employment, time out of cell was little improved from the last reporting year, at an inconsistent maximum of about 1 hour 15 minutes. The Board has, again, been unable to obtain accurate data, as unlocking has been managed largely on individual wings and we understand that the prison has not collected or monitored data centrally. Unsurprisingly perhaps, inconsistency of unlocking and truncated or cancelled time out of cell are a source of stress and frustration for prisoners and, where available, data showed flashpoints when prisoners were unlocked (see 4.3).

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

All arrivals, irrespective of substance misuse status, are provided with information on the service provided by Forward Trust (FT), and FT staff attend a daily mandatory drug

testing (MDT) meeting to ensure appropriate referrals. Following an initial assessment, prisoners referred to the service are allocated a recovery worker and personalised interventions are planned as appropriate.

Within the last six months of the reporting period a family worker started in post and is gradually establishing a caseload. FT also assists in identifying prisoners on their caseload best suited for allocation to the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) landing reinstated on D wing.

In a change introduced in the last half of the reporting year, the unscheduled care worker will now attend ACCT reviews if the nominated recovery worker cannot attend. It is hoped that this will help address some concerns by the Board that healthcare staff are not always available for reviews, due to staffing issues.

6.7 Therapies/soft skills

The Seacole Centre, led by the therapies team (psychologists, mental health practitioners and occupational therapists), offers a full timetable from Monday to Friday, with a variety of therapeutic sessions, such as music production, yoga, psychological groups, plus a creative space, to support prisoners who are struggling with their mental health. There continues to be a good and steady attendance - when they take place. As the table below shows, a significant number of sessions are cancelled: while 366 sessions were facilitated over the reporting year, a further 230 potential sessions were cancelled, predominantly due to the lack of officer availability. This has a clear impact on a particularly vulnerable group of prisoners and is a matter of significant concern to the Board.

Sessions scheduled and cancelled

Activity/ measure	June 23	July 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24
Number of sessions facilitated	32	36	20	27	24	26	15	19	37	39	45	46
Number of sessions cancelled	15	28	21	32	19	23	10	11	23	15	22	11

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

There has been a welcome focus by the prison on work and education this year and there are also indications that the new head of education (in post since August 2023) and their staff have made progress, although significant challenges remain, especially with attendance.

In the 12 months up to March 2024, Novus figures indicate that only 50% of the available education activity places had a prisoner allocated to them, and attendance in these classes was only 50% (therefore, only 25% of places available were filled). By the end of the reporting year, attendance had improved to 32% and the trend appeared likely to continue. From January 2024, the kitchen classroom was reinstated, and Novus was also delivering food safety training to kitchen workers, wing workers and prisoners in the tea packing workshop.

Due to continuing restrictions on prisoner mixing and the geography of the prison, classes in the education department were only available to prisoners from C wing and, from January 2024, from E wing. Classes on A and D wings are held on the wing. The Board understands that attendance is markedly poorer from C and E wings, where prisoners rely on officers to unlock them in time to attend. However, a reduction in off-wing incidents of violence has allowed the prison to remove the requirement for officer supervision of classes in education as part of a wider package of measures to improve allocation and attendance.

Non-attendance is frustrating for the education staff, who often do not know how many men will arrive and say they are not provided with reasons, despite repeatedly requesting this information. The prison acknowledges that staffing levels were particularly problematic over the summer months leading to many cancellations.

The head of education has reported that the standard assessment procedure used to assess the quality of teaching has shown a noticeable improvement during the year (from 45% of lessons rated 'good' to 80% rated 'good' by the end of this reporting year). The Board will continue to monitor progress in these areas.

In addition to mathematics, English and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), activities on offer in the education department include art, barbering, creative writing, business, IT and employability. New initiatives are underway and the Board will report on these in the next reporting year.

The Shannon Trust (a charity that helps people learn to read) has had a very successful year, with mentors and readers in all areas, including foreign national prisoners, coordinating and supporting prisoners who can read to teach those who cannot. Prisoner mentor roles are very popular and highly sought after and are valued by the prisoners. B wing mentors received a national award for their work to identify new learners this year, celebrated with an event, which family members could attend. Mentors also look after book rooms on the wings and coordinate library attendance lists, although library timetables published at the beginning of the year proved aspirational, due to prison staff shortages.

Shannon Trust mentors are also a valuable resource, as they can engage prisoners with the lowest levels of literacy who cannot access other educational opportunities and work. The Trust's local lead has told the Board that she could expand activities further

but that mentor numbers are limited by restricted prisoner mixing in the prison, which effectively prevents the delivery of training to mentors from different wings in a group.

As the Board reported last year, for most of the reporting year, library access remained restricted in person, although prisoners could access books through a delivery system to the wing. Library weeks were very popular and resulted in significant boosts to library membership and book orders. Towards the end of the reporting year, in-person access was opened up to most prisoners – a very welcome development. Prisoners from D wing have some separate provision, and (with other initiatives), the success of an E wing book club resulted in a new, emergent reader group starting (Reading the Way) on A wing. As with so much else, in-person visits to the library often depend on staff being available to escort them.

Among other positive initiatives, the prison held a Visits Book Week in March with the charity Share a Book, which delivered a book shop for men to choose books to send to their children with a letter. The Board is also pleased to report the reinstatement of Story Book Dads (prisoners read and record stories for their children), which is now reported to be reaching increasing numbers of prisoners.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Work began in the previous reporting year to improve allocations of prisoners to activities and enhance the scope and rotation of the work available, with a view to engaging more prisoners and increasing the uptake of employment. Changes were made to speed up security screening. Pay scales for induction and prisoners attending work and education were reviewed to incentivise part-time and off-wing work. Activities hub staff were more proactive in communicating with prisoners about allocation and in trying to resolve timetable clashes, and sources of on-wing support, such as the new Here to Help representatives, were introduced.

From a starting point of around 60%, **allocation** to activities improved over the summer months to a consistent figure of around 70%. The figures for **attendance** to allocated activities was only around 40-45% for the first quarter, significantly below comparator prisons. The prison reported that attendance also improved to around the same figure (70%) over the year, although a review of the prison's purposeful activity in February 2024 identified that failings in allocation and attendance were undermining the overall delivery of purposeful activities, including education (see 7.1). Reasons for non-attendance will be mixed but complaints to the Board painted a picture across the year of sessions being cancelled or running part full because of prison staffing issues, particularly over the summer months. Prisoners complained to the Board that it was not unusual for them to get themselves ready to attend an off-wing activity or work only to be told (sometimes only when they complained they had not been collected) that they were not going, so had stayed locked in their cells.

The prison has indicated that efforts will be made to improve this, and the Board will continue to monitor it.

Workshops provide prisoners with purposeful activity and transferrable skills, skilled work and qualifications, and some have links to industries that can provide employment opportunities on release. Some workshops also provide a service to the prison (such as food packing and laundry) and services to other parts of the prison estate for which the prison is paid. Workers from the React workshop carry out some repairs around the prison and the biohazard workshop provides industrial cleaning teams to clean cells, showers and common areas put out of action by the presence of bodily fluids while, at the same time, providing skills for prisoners in an area in demand.

During the last reporting year, workshops other than laundry, textiles, gardening and recycling were largely not operating because of staffing and other issues. However, the position generally improved this year and other workshops have also gradually reopened or been introduced. Attendance remained susceptible to staff shortages and equipment breakdowns, however, and the choice of activities, education and work available to prisoners was still dependent on their location in the prison.

The Escape café is very popular and well supported by staff and provides excellent training for prisoners in catering and other skills. However, it remains vulnerable to closure because of staffing issues and security, as well as other requirements that limit the pool of available prisoners who are eligible for work there.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The offender management unit (OMU) came under great pressure this reporting year, reflecting external pressures on the wider justice system, the increased population in the prison and significantly increasing staff workloads. Policy changes, such as the extension of the early release scheme (end of custody supervised licence, or ECSL), which was introduced at short notice in March 2024, also created additional pressure on resources in the OMU.

Prison offender managers (POMS) support sentenced men, including those recalled to prison for breach of licence. All sentenced prisoners should be allocated a POM on arrival, but staff shortages and increased workloads caused delays. In February 2024, the Board was told that some high-risk prisoners were unallocated to POMS because of staff shortages.

The prison monitors delivery of sentence planning offender assessment system (OASys) reports by POMS and noted higher backlogs in January 2024, despite higher staffing levels. Another key issue was a chronic shortage of probation officers: only one was in post in January 2024. The prison was taking steps to recruit staff to assist with probation administration, but the problem was compounded by community probation services also being very stretched.

There has been a very significant increase (58%) in applications to the Board related to sentence calculation and other issues related to offender management this reporting year, with many prisoners complaining that requests for information from the prison simply went unanswered.

7.4 Family contact

A Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) family engagement officer in the visitors' centre can support prisoners and liaise with family members on a prisoner's behalf. The prison also runs other positive parenting initiatives such as those set out elsewhere in this report (see 7.1).

Approximately 30% of prisoners ask for social visits. More prisoners this year were being held away from their home area, with family members unable to visit them because of distance and cost. Prisoners have told the Board that they discourage family members from travelling and are resigned to not seeing them for long periods. Those without family members are offered visits from a prison visitor. The perennial issue of providing water and food in the visits' hall was still unresolved at the end of the reporting year and visitors were still unable to buy refreshments on site.

Prisoners tell the Board that booking social visits is usually straightforward but that waiting times for security clearance on arrival can be very long. Remand prisoners still

complain that they struggle to book as many social visits as they want, but the prison says there are usually vacant slots available if prisoners want them and sessions are often not full. Social video calls are available in addition to social visits, but the popularity of these has declined since the pandemic, possibly in part because prisoners have complained that they are hard to book and can get cancelled. In-cell phones have made it far easier for prisoners to speak to family and others in privacy at convenient times, particularly where prisoners have children, but there are frequent complaints that broken phones take weeks or months to repair.

Weekend social visits are allocated according to wing on a fortnightly basis and family days (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings) are arranged across the year. Weekend social visits were cancelled more than once because of staffing issues over the summer months.

7.5 Resettlement planning

The prison employment hub lead sees all sentenced prisoners to offer employment support in the 12-week period before they are due to leave prison. The team can provide valuable help with bank accounts, ID and driving licence applications. The prison has been working to try to expand the service to remand prisoners. Jobcentre Plus and Citizens Advice provide advice and help to all prisoners (including those on remand), although Citizens Advice is very oversubscribed and there is only one staff member in post.

Among others, prisoners receive support and training from charities such as StandOut (which helps prepare small groups of prisoners for employment interviews), Only Connect (offers courses on debt, relationships, choices and status, targeted at young prisoners) and the Black Hero's Journey from Spark Inside (a commissioned coaching programme aimed at young black men in prison, which also provides follow-up support in custody and on release). Sycamore Tree (a restorative justice programme) is also run. The employment hub forges useful links with companies and businesses willing to offer opportunities for employment on release.

The prison is updating its reducing offending strategy to include specific focus on the needs and service demands of remand prisoners, who represent a significant percentage of the prison population and (as the Board has commented before) have been impacted by some significant gaps in provision, particularly as to housing.

A strategic housing lead, based in the prison and at HMP Wandsworth, now provides an overview of housing for prisoners on release. They liaise closely with resettlement team staff based in the prison and St Mungo's (a charity that supports sentenced prisoners before release) and HARP (which focuses on sustaining tenancies for prisoners on remand and provides a wide range of support services). They also have valuable links with resources in the community. Referrals to St Mungo's are made by the probation team, which has been consistently short staffed, and the charity can only help London-based prisoners. The probation team can refer those prisoners being released out of area to their home probation region, but pre-release visits would be remote, i.e. via video link.

The Board still receives complaints from prisoners that there is little timely help available for them (particularly remand prisoners), but the Board's experience is that prison and charity staff will go to considerable lengths to help if they can once they are aware of a problem, and that many prisoners are extremely appreciative of their efforts.

8. The work of the IMB

Members of the Board are unpaid volunteers who have differing backgrounds and experience. Members visit the prison weekly but are not permanently based there. Prisoners can contact the IMB by means of a written application or by speaking to a member of the Board. The Board also relies on the Governor and staff of the prison to assist enquiries and supply information and data to enable it to fulfil its role.

The information contained in this report derives from the work of the Board and information supplied by the prison, unless otherwise indicated, and is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of the prison for the period spanned by this report.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15 (of whom two are in training and one is on leave)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15 (of whom three are in training and two are on leave)
Total number of visits to the establishment	313

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	19	33
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	3	1
C	Equality	2	8
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	17	20
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	15	27
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	15	17
F	Food and kitchens	20	21
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	59	68
H1	Property within the establishment	36	55
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	16	43
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	4	8
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	38	60
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	46	59
K	Transfers	10	7
L	Miscellaneous	36	45
	Applications on Comp 2 forms (ordinary complaints)	116	0*
	Total number of applications	452	472

*Comp 2 applications are no longer dealt with by the IMB.

Annex A

Main service providers

- Maintenance: Gov Facilities Services Limited
- Education and training: Novus
- Advice and guidance service: Shaw Trust
- Escort contractor: Serco
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Practice Plus Group (PPG)
- Mental health: Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental NHS Health Trust (BEH)
- Substance misuse programme: Forward Trust
- Social care: London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham adult social care team
- Visitors' centre: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
- Resettlement support: St Mungo's
- Adult safeguarding: Hammersmith & Fulham Council



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