



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Long Lartin

**For reporting year
1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	5
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	11
5. Fair and humane treatment	14
6. Health and wellbeing	18
7. Progression and resettlement	21
 The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	23
Applications to the IMB	23
 Annex A	
Service providers	24
 Annex B	
Tables and graphs	25

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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 Long Lartin is a long term high security (LTHSE) prison, near Evesham in Worcestershire. Built in 1971 as a category C prison it was upgraded to a dispersal prison in 1973. Perrie wing and the control separation and rehabilitation unit (CSRU), both with in-cell sanitation were built in 1999. Two further modern wings were added in 2009.

The prison accommodates predominantly category A and B adult male prisoners.

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, known as the operational capacity, was 609¹.

Prisoners are accommodated in single cells in six mainstream wings, two support wings and the CSRU. A small number of prisoners live in a preparatory psychologically informed planned environment (pre-PIPE) unit, designed to motivate and engage prisoners and prepare them for transfer to an appropriate therapeutic community or PIPE unit elsewhere. The four original wings, accommodating approximately 280 prisoners lack in-cell sanitation and running water.

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

Background to the report

This was another difficult year for prisoners and also for staff, albeit providing different challenges to those of 2023. A Governing Governor was appointed on detached duty in December 2023 tasked with providing new impetus and reversing the serious decline of the prison.

Significant shortcomings had already been identified by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) at the end of 2022. A further unannounced inspection in the autumn of 2024 reported there were some improvements, however many of the concerns identified by inspectors reflect those regularly raised and made in successive annual reports by the Independent Monitoring Board.

Whilst progress made is acknowledged, much more is needed to make Long Lartin a more humane establishment for holding prisoners, many of whom may spend the rest of their lives here. This will be limited without greater support from the Government and the Prison Service.

3.1 Main Findings

Photographs were taken to illustrate the poor prison fabric and prisoner living conditions however the Governor declined his permission for these to be published.

Safety

- Incidents of self-harm have continued to increase and are more prevalent than in other LTHSE prisons.
- Increased levels of violence are attributable to the widespread availability of drugs and lack of purposeful activity.
- Outdated and failing security systems are a danger to safety and are unable to prevent frequent drone deliveries of illicit items.

Fair and humane treatment

- The cells on four wings lack running water and sanitation which falls below modern standards of hygiene and decency.
- The continued failure of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to maintain the infrastructure and fabric has deprived prisoners and staff of a decent environment in which to live and work.
- Increased officer numbers have improved regime. However, prisoners' quality of life and progression can too often be adversely affected by inexperienced officers' lack of adequate training and understanding.
- Chaplaincy is well respected and provides good pastoral care to all prisoners.
- Key work is still far from achieving its targets and objectives however the quality of key work entries improved during the year.
- Inefficient management of prisoners' property continues to be a source of frustration and anger.

Health and wellbeing

- Increasingly wide availability of drugs is detrimental to physical and mental health.
- In-patient facilities are not suitable for prisoners in poor physical health or for the provision of therapeutic support.

- Appointment of a head of drugs strategy lead should help to restrict supply, reduce demand and aid prisoners' recovery from drug dependency.

Progression and resettlement

- The quality and scope of education continues to improve but progress beyond level 2 is very limited.
- More workshops are now open but there is insufficient work to occupy all prisoners and a lack of purposeful work to provide prisoners with a sense of achievement.
- Closer collaboration between key workers and prison offender managers (POMs) would improve prisoners' opportunities.
- Initiatives to improve the quality of family visits have been appreciated by prisoners and their families.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Drones: the increasing number, and the consequences, of illicit items carried into the prison by drones has been well documented and publicised. When will Government action to prevent drone incursions become effective in the LTHSE?
- Security systems: much of the existing surveillance technology is obsolete or unserviceable, increasing the vulnerability of prisoners and staff. Will the Minister confirm that funding has been allocated and provide a timeframe to provide a modern, fully operational surveillance system?
- Unsatisfactory management of infrastructure and maintenance: what measures will the Minister take to ensure that his department improves management of the contract with Amey plc in order that the fabric and infrastructure can be restored to a decent standard and then properly maintained?
- Modernisation: what is the Minister's plan to modernise the prison?
- Lack of in-cell sanitation: prisoners on four wings continue to use the 'slopping out' process, which falls below modern standards of decency. When does the Government intend to provide all cells with running water and sanitation?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Drones: frequent drone incursions are delivering dangerous illicit items. Will the Prison Service confirm whether it is satisfied that the Government is making available to Long Lartin all the necessary drone counter measures at its disposal?
- Security systems: the maintenance contractor, Amey, has been unable to restore or maintain the ageing surveillance equipment to enable it to provide the prison with adequate security cover. What measures are being taken to install and maintain effective and reliable electronic surveillance and when?
- Prison infrastructure, maintenance and projects: repeat question from 2023 - to which specific building and maintenance projects has funding been allocated in the next three years and where does a new kitchen sit in the order of priority?
- Healthcare centre (HCC): what full programme of measures is planned to provide all necessary facilities (including end of life) for in-patients?
- Prison work contracts: what actions is the Prison Service taking to secure quality work contracts particularly in the LTHSE?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Security systems: operation of current electronic security protection falls below expectation of that originally specified for a high security prison. Pending formal approval and installation of a completely new system, what local short term plans exist to improve confidence in the safe operation of the prison?
- Prison infrastructure, maintenance and projects: how will the Governor ensure that prison priorities are understood and acted upon by Amey?
- Litter and waste: what plans are in place to ensure that the prison is consistently kept clear of litter and waste?
- Prison staffing: following the changes to profiling towards the end of the year, what further measures are proposed to enable all aspects of the regime to operate across the prison (including healthcare)?
- Key worker sessions: when will regular key worker sessions for all prisoners be reinstated?
- Management of property: notwithstanding practical storage constraints, will the Governor undertake to improve the management of prisoners' property?

3.3 Response to the last report

The responses below from the Minister and the Prison Service were provided in letters from Lord Timpson, Minister of State for Justice, dated 18 September 2024 and the second (2) the 19 November 2024.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
TO THE MINISTER		
What action is the Government taking to prevent drone incursions in prisons?	No fly zones over prisons. Authorised use of counter-drone technology. (2) Cross-government working specialist with partners and agencies.	Situation has worsened. HMPPS Head of Security Projects addressed LTHSE IMB briefing in December outlining: multi-agency working to review options: physical operation curtain and technology solutions. No consensus view on actions - funding issues stated as reason for lack of progress.
Will the Minister confirm that funds to provide a modern, fully operational surveillance system will be authorised and allocated within the next 12 months?	Sufficient coverage to maintain security. Acknowledged maintenance difficulties. System upgrade to be retendered. (2) Meanwhile the prison is managing security.	Minimal operational progress. Systems in the main are obsolete. Following the ministerial visit to site on 08/08/23 it is understood that the postponed HMPPS project to review and upgrade the main security system has been resurrected and a scoping project commenced. However unlikely to be commissioned and completed in the next 2-5 years.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<p>Will the Minister acknowledge that the prison infrastructure is now so degraded that effective routine maintenance is no longer possible and that a major modernisation project is required in the near future?</p>	<p>Healthcare has been refurbished.</p> <p>Other “out of sight” projects listed.</p> <p>Pending projects include a new kitchen, repairs to kitchen roof and elsewhere.</p> <p>(2) New kitchen project to start in January 2026.</p> <p>Amey performance has improved and they have passed two key performance targets over past four months. The MoJ property team monitor performance.</p>	<p>Work completed on in-patient cells. Association room ceiling is water damaged and out of use pending asbestos check.</p> <p>Kitchen became obsolete in June and a temporary portacabin kitchen set up which is not fit for purpose.</p> <p>This date is not confirmed.</p> <p>HMPPS and the prison are unaware of Amey’s key performance targets.</p>
<p>When does the Government intend to provide all cells with running water and sanitation?</p>	<p>Focus on upgrades of present system.</p> <p>Not a priority.</p>	
<p>Will the Minister visit the prison in 2024 to meet prisoners and listen to their concerns?</p>	<p>Unable to commit to a timescale.</p> <p>(2) A visit as soon as diary allows.</p>	<p>No progress has been made.</p>
TO THE PRISON SERVICE		
<p>Are adequate prevention measures being taken to reduce drone incursions and when will they become effective?</p>	<p>Vulnerability assessment undertaken; minor physical vulnerabilities have been addressed.</p> <p>The prison has had some success with its local initiatives.</p>	<p>Situation continues to deteriorate resulting in increased use of drugs, violence, assaults and safety concerns.</p> <p>Limited work to improve some window security.</p> <p>Installation of preventative netting considered; no progress due to lack of funding.</p>
<p>What measures are being taken to install and maintain effective and reliable electronic surveillance?</p>	<p>No response received.</p>	<p>Minimal attempts to repair obsolete equipment.</p> <p>No progress with the main security system upgrade.</p>
<p>To which specific building and maintenance projects</p>	<p>No response received.</p>	<p>No progress or up to date understanding of any firm</p>

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
has funding been allocated in the next three years and in what order of priority?		commitments or funding allocations.
How will the Prison Service ensure that Amey provides a satisfactory maintenance service?	Problem with recruitment and retention of staff.	On going problem with recruitment and retention of staff. Lack of robust contract management.
What is the full programme of measures to provide an acceptable level of care for in-patients?	In-patient unit has undergone some refurbishment. In-patient policy agreed between the prison and the healthcare service provider.	After refurbishment, health and safety check and infection control inspection the unit is now operational. Heating and association room issues ongoing. The disabled shower remains unusable.
Are rules covering transfer and possession of property belonging to prisoners in the LTHSE to be standardised?	Prisoners' Property Policy Framework has not alleviated problems associated with transferring. During the 12 months up to April 2024, there were no complaints attributed to the prisoner escort and custody service (PECS). Procedures have been put in place to improve the management of property within and into the prison.	No tangible improvement. Large numbers of property applications and complaints continue to be submitted.
The responses, below, from the Governor, were provided in a letter from the Governing Governor, dated 21 October 2024.		
TO THE GOVERNOR		
What further measures can be taken to reduce self-harm?	Restructured Safer Custody team with new operational manager. New profile to be introduced (November) to include clearer profiled key worker tasks to target the most vulnerable prisoners.	Real progress here with much work done although self-harm numbers are rapidly increasing and are well above self-harm in comparable estate.
Is high priority to be given to enable repairs and improvements to the unreliable and faulty security systems?	CCTV work on A-D wings.	Regular detailed reviews of the situation with Amey to identify and prioritise areas of major concern but real progress is severely limited by lack of funding to procure replacement with up to date equipment.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<p>Will high priority be given during 2024 to restoring the damaged kitchen fabric and appliances to an acceptable standard for hygienic food production?</p> <p>Will Amey maintenance priorities be set and monitored by prison management?</p>	<p>£0.5m acquired to refurbish the old kitchen.</p> <p>Not the responsibility of the Governor.</p>	<p>No progress.</p> <p>Little effect on day to day maintenance issues.</p>
<p>What measures are in hand to remedy the litter and waste cleaning situation?</p>	<p>Some improvement, however A-D wings do not facilitate a remedy. Some specific initiatives including biohazard team.</p>	<p>Some improvement on 2023. A-D wings waste thrown from windows and irregular grass cutting remain a problem.</p>
<p>Will the improved staffing situation enable the return to a full and consistent regime and regular key work sessions?</p>	<p>Key work and regime have improved during early 2024. New profile should further improve key work sessions.</p>	<p>Significant improvement on 2023 although still unpredictable. Still to materialise.</p>
<p>Will the Governor review and clarify the local rules, process and responsibilities for ensuring that property reaches its owner without unreasonable delay?</p>	<p>Reception services, prisoners' access to and handling of property needs to improve. Reduction in compensation claims.</p>	<p>Continues to cause serious concerns.</p>

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Transfers in and out increased during the year from less than 10 to nearer 20 each month placing more demands on reception staff. Most prisoners are transferred in from other prisons and have knowledge of prison procedures and regimes. Complaints of poor administration, denial of basic needs and lack of peer support on arrival, especially out of normal working hours have been evident. We note some improvements to the incoming property searching process.

The history and vulnerabilities of new arrivals are reviewed at the weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM). Inductions are normally thorough but can be subject to change and cancellation.

Delays in reuniting new arrivals with their property continue to cause anxiety.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

During the year, there were six deaths in custody. One death was from natural causes and the outcomes of the other deaths are awaited pending investigation from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and the Coroner.

The number of self-harm incidents has increased considerably during recent years and is higher than in equivalent LTHSE prisons. There were 664 incidents during 2024, as Annex B, Table 1. The main causes of self-harm have been identified by the prison safety team and confirmed by board monitoring as:

- ready availability of drugs leading to debt, intimidation and violence
- minimal return in 2023 to a full regime following Covid-19
- lack of support for prisoners addicted to vaping
- delayed return of property or loss in transit
- family problems
- lack of understanding by inexperienced prison officers
- poor mental health

The Board considers that classifying mental health as the cause of 23% of self-harm incidents is too broad and that the aggravating factors leading to each incident need to be properly identified and recorded.

The average number of open assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans has reduced during the year possibly because prisoners who self-harm frequently (chronic self-harmers) are being managed by different means. Regular monitoring by the Board of reviews found most to be correctly constituted and conducted, but poor diary planning and incomplete multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) have continued to cause delays or cancellations. The Board continues to maintain that POMs should be present at reviews when their contribution could provide reassurance or clarification of progression plans.

Listeners' training and support from the Samaritans continue to be good and numbers of Listeners have increased but plans to improve facilities have not materialised. Access to prisoners has improved but the condition and cleanliness of Listener rooms on most wings is often poor, which is not conducive to the sensitive nature of this work.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

There were 109 assaults on staff and 110 prisoner on prisoner assaults, an increase on the previous year of 21% for the former and 59% for the latter. (See 4.5 and Annex B, Table 2.)

Prisoner association has increased but staff shortages, driven by operational requirements have periodically restricted regime and purposeful activity, causing boredom and frustration leading to violence. Additionally, drone deliveries of illicit items have significantly contributed to an increase in violent behaviour.

One hundred and ninety one prisoners who posed an increased risk of violence were referred for challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) totalling 321 actual referrals. Seventy-six CSIPs were opened and reviewed weekly by an MDT. Advice from forensic psychologists was available to managers and staff to help understand individuals' risks, triggers and protective factors at an early stage and to set appropriate intervention targets and goals for support plans. CSIP analyses have assisted managers to formulate strategic decisions for reduction of violence and promotion of safety.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force (UoF) incidents include all those involving use of PAVA incapacitant spray and rigid bar handcuffs which must be worn by prisoners under escort (see Annex B, Tables 3 and 4). UoF increased this year primarily for reasons of prevention of harm/assault and refusal to locate. An analysis of ethnicity, religion, age and location reveals no obvious patterns.

The Board is satisfied that managers have sought to minimise use of control and restraint and deployment of PAVA. All incidents of assault, threatening and abusive behaviour, damage to property and resistant non-compliance are reviewed monthly and are now fully analysed by the head of safety with a focus on understanding, learning and coaching to help reduce the need for UoF in the future.

There was improvement in staff training in the use of rigid bar handcuffs, PAVA and spontaneous protection enabling accelerated response (SPEAR). Monitoring by the prison of body worn cameras has improved their wearing and use.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Throughout the year, the Board has been very concerned by the high number of drone incursions into the establishment, which bring illicit items. There have been 96 sightings and 28 packages retrieved but the number of successful deliveries is unknown. Drones are bringing in drugs including ketamine, weapons, phones, tools and tobacco. Several references to the consequences of drone deliveries have been made in this report which illustrates the pervasive nature of the harm they are causing. (See 4.3, 4.6 and 6.6). This deluge of illicit material has increased levels of trading, debt, threats, violence and self-harm. It damages prisoners' physical and mental health and poses a serious risk to stability and security.

Illicit items continue to be brought into the prison by other means but drones are overwhelmingly the main method of entry.

4.6 Security Systems

Much of the existing internal and perimeter surveillance technology remains obsolete or unserviceable. The emergency control room (ECR) is therefore unable to fully monitor

wings, which compromises aspects of safety for prisoners and staff. Frequent drone deliveries to cell windows are now widely accepted as the norm.

The Board has monitored regular meetings between prison managers and the maintenance contractor (Amey) to review and prioritise repairs and upgrading, but no worthwhile progress has been made. Without complete modernisation of the systems and an effective maintenance contract, the security of the prison and the safety of prisoners and staff remain compromised. The Board seeks assurance that top priority will now be given to bringing the security systems up to an acceptable standard for a high security prison without further delay.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The fabric and infrastructure of the establishment continues to deteriorate and Amey appears to be either unwilling or unable to provide an acceptable level of service. In spite of assurances from Ministers in letters dated 11 May 2023, 18 September 2024 and 19 November 2024 there has been no improvement in the management of maintenance and repairs. There is now a general acceptance by managers, staff and prisoners that any significant improvement in the performance of Amey, whose site managers rarely remain in post for more than a few months, will not happen.

The kitchen has been allowed to deteriorate year by year until its closure was forced in 2024, leaving staff to manage with an external temporary kitchen in a single cabin to produce meals for nearly 600 prisoners. Following recognition that this was totally inadequate, a second external kitchen of six cabins was installed, providing slightly better facilities but located even further from wing serveries. Food preparation has been difficult and menu scope has been limited. Neither of the temporary kitchens has been suitable for employment of prisoners so a small number of staff have worked in cramped conditions, cooking and washing up with limited appliances and have continued to produce one hot meal each day. Wastewater discharges into an already overflowing sewage pit a few feet from food preparation areas. The electricity generator has frequently broken down and in cold weather the water supply has frozen. The Board has been impressed by the kitchen staff's dedication, forbearance and good humour, but shares their frustration with the slow progress to restore the main kitchen.

The air handling system for E and F wings, which have in-cell sanitation has been out of service since early 2023 resulting in foul air in cells and extensive mould in showers. Poor ventilation in cells has been made worse by permanently blocked vents.

Healthcare in-patient cells were closed for three months for installation of new floors and fittings. There followed a cold period with no heating in occupied cells. The association room still awaits major repairs and the prisoners' shower is unusable.

Urinals and sluices for human waste on wings without in-cell sanitation have frequently been blocked and unusable for extended periods.

Appliances in wing kitchens and laundries have been out of service for long periods.

The unreliability of the electronic night sanitation system (Nightsan) on the four wings without in-cell sanitation or running water has necessitated regular use of lidded buckets, without hand washing facilities and undignified 'slopping out' after unlock. The Board continues to maintain that this is outdated and inhumane treatment.

There is widespread litter in outside areas and human waste is thrown daily from cell windows of wings without in-cell sanitation. Grass has not been mown with any regularity leaving periods with long grass which conceals waste, attracts vermin and provides cover for drone deliveries.

5.2 Segregation

In 2023 the Prison Service imposed a limit of 28 prisoners in the control separation and rehabilitation unit (CSRU). This, together with assistance from the HMPPS Pathways to Progression team has aided better management, but the population continues to be inflated by prisoners who, for individual reasons, cannot or will not locate on mainstream or support wings. This periodically necessitates segregated prisoners being accommodated on mainstream wings.

Rule 45 segregation reviews have been well conducted, normally by the segregation governor and monitored by an IMB member. However, lack of suitable transfer opportunities for prisoners with complex needs can result in some remaining in this environment for extended periods, hindering progression and leading to deterioration in their behaviour and condition.

Special accommodation cells containing minimal furniture for holding prisoners demonstrating extreme violence were used on only four occasions and for short periods.

The protected characteristics of those held in the CSRU, as of 31 December 2024, are shown in Annex B, Table 6.

The Board regularly monitors adjudications and has been concerned that the process has too frequently been used inappropriately, weakening its deterrent effect to maintain good order and discipline. Uniformed staff are now encouraged to make more appropriate use of the incentives scheme before resorting to adjudications. Adjudication statistics over the past three years are shown in Annex B, Table 7. Over the reporting year 1,616 out of 2,448 adjudications (66%) were proven, with 115 cases outstanding.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The Board has received many applications from prisoners on topics such as property issues, canteen order delays, missed clinic appointments and cancelled library visits. Although officer numbers have increased, wing staff shortages due to sickness, emergency duties and possibly some poor mentoring of inexperienced officers have too frequently impacted on prisoners' wellbeing. This resulted in the Board receiving applications from prisoners on issues that should have been resolved on the wing by their officers.

A decision to replace the prisoner consultative committee (PCC) with an elected prison council (PC) was not fully implemented, resulting in very little consultation with prisoners. By the year end no elections had taken place and prisoners had not felt able to properly air their concerns. Monthly wing forums provide an opportunity to resolve local issues but there has been no consistency and on some wings they have seldom been held.

Applications to the IMB achieved a record high in 2024. Whilst there was a significant rise in complaints to the prison (5.7), the Board's view is that reduced options for prisoner representation led prisoners to use the IMB route to raise seemingly intractable concerns.

The target of two key worker sessions each month for every prisoner has continued to seem out of reach. In 2024 compliance with this standard was only 13.54% (2,050 sessions) compared to 16.39% (2,277 sessions) in 2023. However the quality of sessions, which are measured on a national scale, appears to have significantly improved during the year and it is understood that Long Lartin rose from the worst in its comparator group in 2023 to second place.

5.4 Equality and diversity

There was a temporary equalities manager during 2024. However, equalities action team meetings have been held every two months. Attendance by senior staff has been good and, in contrast to 2023, wing representation has been broader. Protected characteristics data on all major aspects of prisoner life is scrutinised. During this year safer custody staff have increased efficiency by analysing data and investigating anomalies prior to meetings.

The continued work with neurodiverse prisoners is having positive effects.

Discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRF) records over the past three years are shown in Annex B, Table 8. It is notable that, whereas 73% of DIRFs received in 2023 were investigated only 54% were investigated in 2024. Training received by the equalities team from external partners Zahid Mubarek Trust in 2024 allowed them to more effectively screen DIRF submissions; those screened out were treated as complaints.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team is fully staffed, well led, accessible and proactive. Cooperation between uniformed staff and chaplains is good. Chaplains attend daily rounds in the CSRU, all Rule 45 and ACCT reviews and have a visible presence on wings. The team is well informed and aware of prisoners needing pastoral, moral or religious support. Comfort and aid is given to prisoners facing bereavement and to those nearing end of life. Close liaison with the National Association of Official Prison Visitors (NAOPV) helps prisoners who have no support from outside the prison.

The managing chaplain and his team were justly congratulated by HMIP for demonstrating impressive unity of purpose and for their extensive contribution to the life of the prison.

The year end population of 570 included 239 Muslims and 188 Christians of various denominations. Muslim Friday prayers and Roman Catholic and Anglican Sunday services are held weekly. Chaplains representing other faiths visit periodically and faith group sessions are held regularly. The Bishop of Gloucester, Anglican Bishop for HM Prisons visited during the year and the Bishop of Worcester preached at the well-attended Christmas carol service with a Salvation Army band and prisoners' choir.

Four very popular Sing Inside events were held and it is hoped that there will be more in 2025. All religious festivals are supported to encourage faith members.

Chaplains are an essential element in up to seven ACCT reviews held each day. Too frequently reviews have been delayed due to non-availability of case co-ordinators which wastes the time of chaplains and other staff involved.

Investment is now badly needed to repair the chapels which continue to deteriorate with leaking roofs, falling masonry and reduced electricity supply.

5.6 Incentives schemes

HMIP found that only 8% of prisoners believed that the culture in the establishment encouraged good behaviour. Feedback from prisoners supports this finding.

The incentives scheme policy document was updated in March 2024. Prisoners' perception is that recorded entries are more likely to concentrate on bad behaviour at the expense of improving their reputation and progression opportunities.

Factors that may contribute to lack of fair treatment are inconsistent incentives scheme review decisions, failure to take account of mental health issues, language difficulties and denial of access to communications for prisoners on basic level.

In 2024 there have been a number of initiatives to address shortcomings in the incentives scheme process. These include monthly incentive policy forums to strengthen accountability, transparency and procedural justice; the formation of a young adult strategy and action plan; and reinstatement of a reasonable adjustments panel to meet the needs of prisoners with identified disabilities.

5.7 Complaints

The prison processed approximately 4715 complaints during the year compared with 3473 in 2023. These figures do not include confidential access complaints, appeals, or complaints to or from other prisons. There have been improvements in management and the requirement to report daily to the Governor on the number of complaints in progress is an encouraging initiative but there is still considerable room for improvement including:

- quality of responses
- replies from appropriate respondents
- rejection without clear reasons given

The Board considers that complaints about property lost during transfer and within the prison (20% of all complaints reviewed by the Board) have received the weakest responses.

5.8 Property

The highest number of applications to the IMB were property related. This reflects an in-depth analysis undertaken by the Independent Prisoner Complaints Investigations (IPCI) function of the PPO during 2024 which found that property generated the most common complaints.

Separation from property can badly affect prisoners' morale and wellbeing, creating mistrust and a sense of unfairness, sometimes leading to poor behaviour and self-harm. Sixteen percent of IMB applications related to lost and delayed delivery of property and it remains a major source of frustration. The Board is concerned that too many officers underestimate the importance that prisoners attach to their property.

The introduction of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, reissued in October 2023, appears to have achieved no improvement to property management within this establishment. Factors contributing to this unsatisfactory situation are:

- inexperience of many staff
- inadequate storage and over-full facilities within the establishment
- poor communication and liaison between reception and wing staff
- incorrect procedures for cell clearances, searches and movements
- volumetric controls not being enforced
- poor collaboration between prisons in response to queries and complaints
- the unwieldy system of tags and hand-written property cards which are often hard to read/follow
- unclear HMPPS guidance on property management

Whilst there is certainly room for improvement in property handling within the prison, progress will be limited without radical modernisation of procedures by HMPPS.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The in-patient unit should be regarded as a 24-hour healthcare unit, as the provision available is not that which would be found in a clinical setting within a hospital.

The combination of the prison environment and widespread availability of illicit drugs have made it difficult for prisoners to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Mental ill health and use of prescribed medication has increased.

It seems likely that the increase in hospitalisation of prisoners reflects a general deterioration in prisoners' health.

In-patient cells were predominantly used for prisoners with challenging behaviour, often related to personality disorder or mental health conditions. The in-patient unit is unable to provide a supportive therapeutic regime for these prisoners, who must often wait many weeks for transfer to secure hospitals. Despite a protracted refurbishment programme, the unit remains unsuitable for prisoners in poor physical health. The unit was inspected by HMIP and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in October 2024 and both organisations reported concerns on clinical record-keeping. The Board understands that an action plan to address this has been developed.

Staffing levels in healthcare were affected by recruitment delays and vacant posts were covered by agency and bank staff. Podiatry and physiotherapy services are now contracted via the lead healthcare provider, leading to more consistent provision of clinics. However a high number of clinic appointments were cancelled by the prison, mainly due to shortage of uniformed staff.

With the involvement of the drug strategy manager, the incentivised substance-free living wing (ISFL) is making progress.

6.2 Physical Healthcare

The in-patient unit was refurbished, including laying of a new floor over a period of seven months, during which time prisoners were cared for on the wings except several prisoners with mental health issues who were located in remote cells at the rear of the unit. The ramp which gives access to the showers is too steep for wheelchairs making the unit unsuitable for patients with limited mobility. The disabled shower has not been usable for many years. The association room remains unsafe and unusable. There were protracted periods without heating and hot water in the unit towards the end of the year. Two prisoners were cared for in the end-of-life cell which has inadequate facilities for this purpose.

The number of health champions (prisoners who work for the healthcare department) was reduced to four due to individual champions progressing to other prisons. The four remaining champions were all on mainstream wings, with those prisoners in the role of information advice and guidance (PIAGs) assisting on the two support wings. This severely limited the number of sessions which were further reduced by security and regime issues. There has been a marked drop in attendance rates for healthcare appointments as champions can no longer deliver appointment letters outside their own wings.

Drug dispensing at hatches should always be supervised by officers, but absence due to staff shortages or lack of attention by officers has caused concerns that prisoners may not be taking their medication as prescribed and that trafficking is being facilitated.

This year has seen a reduction in the number of health promotion sessions, largely because the patient engagement lead (PEL) now divides her time between Long Lartin and HMP Hewell.

Insufficient officers in healthcare and too many stand-still roll checks led to loss of clinic time and delays in treatment, resulting in longer waiting lists and increased stress and anxiety for both prisoners and staff. At the end of the year the waiting time to see a GP had risen to 10 weeks. Clinics frequently started late or were cancelled. Outpatient clinic attendance was approximately 65% compared with 90% for clinics and psycho-social clinics held on wings. The high number of hospital bed-watches has reduced officers' availability for other duties.

6.3 Mental health

The psychology department continues to offer valuable support to prisoners through programme delivery, particularly with violence and motivational work, including a new programme called 'Building Choices'. The department provides an important service particularly to prisoners and staff in the CSRU, to vulnerable IPP prisoners and to the pre-PIPE unit.

There has been significant progress this year in the ISFL (see section 6.7). It is regrettable that an offer by Inclusion to provide wing officers with mental health awareness training was not taken up, but they have given short training sessions to new officers at induction sessions.

The continued use of in-patient healthcare accommodation for prisoners with mental health issues is not appropriate. The environment remains unsuitable for the provision of the therapeutic support and care which these prisoners need.

6.4 Social Care

Social care is delivered by the safety and equalities team under a memorandum of understanding between the prison, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Practice Plus Group (PPG). There has been little change since last year but liaison with WCC appears to have improved. Cases are raised at weekly SIM meetings but quarterly steering group meetings have not been held during the year. Seven referrals were made to WCC and a care-worker attends regularly for one prisoner. If a prisoner requires low-level support this is provided by a prisoner as part of the 'buddy' scheme, which is a paid role. An occupational therapist makes decisions on provision of specialist equipment.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

The prison regime improved in comparison with 2023 when it was heavily restricted due to Covid-19. A stable regime gives prisoners purpose and aids mental health, but in 2024 demands on staff resources caused regime inconsistency, with frequent workshop closures and prisoners often arriving late for work. Prisoners were left with too much time on their hands which led to dissatisfaction.

Purposeful or structured community activity during association, a culture which had been successfully implemented before Covid-19, remained very limited but the introduction of 'spinning' (indoor cycling) sessions introduced by the gym have proved popular with enhanced incentives scheme level prisoners.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Prisoners were frequently found under the influence of readily available illicit substances. The smell of cannabis often pervaded areas of the prison and some potentially lethal distilled liquor was discovered.

Management by the drug strategy lead has brought better co-ordination between departments to improve rehabilitation therapy and staff training. A new drug rehabilitation strategy is to be issued in 2025. At the end of the year a workshop was renovated and designated for substance misuse rehabilitation sessions including alcoholics anonymous (AA) and cocaine anonymous (CA).

Easy access to drugs does nothing to help prisoners who are trying to reduce their reliance and increases the vulnerability of prisoners who are targeted to test, store and carry them. The number of drugs related code blue emergency calls, ambulance transfers and hospital admissions has significantly increased.

6.7 Incentivised substance free living (ISFL)

The ISFL unit is accommodated on Perrie Blue wing. The early part of the year saw little improvement since 2023, with staff shortages and the presence of overspill prisoners. However, since June, only appropriate prisoners are accommodated on this unit, leading to an improvement in the environment. Prior to these changes, drugs were readily available, undermining the intended ethos of the unit.

Closer involvement by inclusion recovery workers and the continued presence of mentors have brought progress. A drug-recovery model is followed, including more single and group sessions, community forums and therapeutic activities, plus twice weekly meetings with POMs. The intention is that prisoners who seriously want to control their drug use and rehabilitate can benefit from the supportive therapeutic regime to aid progression to specialist programmes elsewhere.

Thirty prisoners started the programme during the year. Six were deselected, one made a progressive move and six were almost ready to make a progressive move.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library, soft skills

The education department has had a successful year which was recognised by Ofsted who described the provision as being of high quality. Committed and enthusiastic teachers, assisted by the support team, have improved lives and outcomes for many prisoners. Peer mentors, who are well regarded by their fellow prisoners, have also made an important contribution. Good attendance levels throughout the year reflect the quality of provision and the enthusiasm for learning. Education places allocated increased from 1,546 in May to 2,504 in October.

In addition to literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), available courses include catering, cleaning, health and wellbeing and business. New courses in music technology and barbering were introduced this year. Work in a range of categories submitted to Koestler Arts resulted in an impressive number of awards in 2024. Where appropriate, one-to-one education is encouraged with increasing take-up, particularly in the CSRU.

The Board is concerned that progression is too limited and that academically gifted prisoners are unable to realise their potential. Most accredited programmes reach no further than level 2 with the exception of art and business at level 3. Many serving long sentences would gain from further advanced study which would offer challenge, raise self-esteem and support rehabilitation.

The library provides valuable support and prisoners make good use of the facilities. The creative writing course introduced this year has proved to be popular.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Workshops were frequently closed early in the year. The situation improved although it has taken prisoners time to re-adjust to the routine of daily work and refusals to attend work remain a concern. There is insufficient work to keep willing workers purposefully occupied. The textiles workshop has been closed for most of the year due to staffing issues and the planned laundrette has not materialised. Four of the seven workshops in operation offer meaningless and monotonous work and typically, half of the prisoners in these workshops do not engage. By contrast, in the creator centre and the two woodwork shops new skills are developed and prisoners are more motivated; however, all work is still classified as unskilled.

It is hard to identify any rehabilitative value in the work offered to many prisoners. There are no incentives for achieving targets and the prisoner pay review has exacerbated the problem. Much needed new and interesting contracts have not been secured for reasons including security objections to the importation of tools and the inability of the prison to provide a reliable workforce to fulfil contracts. The Prison Group Director (PGD) acknowledges that there is insufficient work across the LTHSE to keep prisoners purposefully occupied and that securing contracts is increasingly difficult.

There has been some success with placement of neurodivergent prisoners in appropriate workshops which is encouraging.

7.3 Offender management, progression

This was a busy year for the Offender Management Unit (OMU) with the additional work required for the national early release (SDS40) scheme. Four prisoners were eligible and although the unit made every effort to work with the community probation service to finalise post release plans, the response was not always satisfactory.

The number of overdue offender assessment system (OASys) reports was reduced to 54 from 107 in 2023

Prisoners' contact with their POMs has improved and new prisoners meet them within 14 days of arrival. Surgeries are held fortnightly in the ISFL and plans are in place to introduce them in workshops in 2025. Single point of contact POMs (SPOC POMs) now work with TACT (Terrorism Act 2000) prisoners, young adults, prisoners on the offender personality disorder (OPD) pathway and in the pre-PIPE unit. However the 2019 offender management in custody (OMiC) model for close collaboration between POMs and key workers appears to be difficult to achieve (see 5.3).

The number of category C prisoners, for whom Long Lartin is an unsuitable location, has reduced from nine at the end of 2023 to five in 2024.

A priority for the OMU has been to improve support for imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners of whom there were 17 at the end of 2024. Many remain in prison well beyond their tariff, leaving them without hope or trust, often resulting in disengagement from the process. Progression plans for these prisoners have now been developed focussing on motivation, clear direction and hope for eventual release, drawing on support from all appropriate departments and key workers. During the year one prisoner progressed to a category D prison and another was awaiting a progressive move to an OPD pathway space.

The pre-PIPE unit had a successful year, largely due to the innovative and committed staff team. Six residents were successful in a move to their progressive pathway. An important development was the introduction of a system whereby clinical and operational staff work together to produce a group-based formulation for each resident which help to inform treatment pathways and content for key work sessions.

7.4 Family contact

Family contact is essential to the mental wellbeing and rehabilitation of prisoners. The success of these visits is due to the well managed visits team.

There were nine all day family visits and weekend visits were usually full. New initiatives in 2024 included a specific visits day for the ISFL unit, an inter-prison visit for a married couple, and a special event for prisoners who receive no family visits to advise on the support available from official prison visitors (OPVs).

Further changes were introduced to support and improve family contact including in-cell telephony, changes to procedures maximising time with visitors, and reconfiguring the visits hall to increase capacity. Approximately 30 staff were trained in visits procedures.

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) significantly enhances the experience for both adult and child visitors and it is regrettable that their presence in 2024 was reduced.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	574
Total number of segregation reviews attended	572

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year	% change
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	22	28	27
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	26	40	54
C	Equality	3	4	33
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	15	27	80
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	19	34	79
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	11	11	0
F	Food and kitchens	8	8	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	30	50	67
H1	Property within the establishment	30	41	37
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	20	23	15
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	11	4	-63
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	15	22	47
J1	Staff/prisoner concerns, relating to bullying	38	37	-2.5
J2	Staff/prisoner concerns, other	21	44	110
K	Transfers	16	1	-94
L	Miscellaneous	18	27	50
	Total number of applications	303	403	33

Annex A

Service providers

- Canteen: DHL Group
- Education: Milton Keynes College
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Practice Plus Group (under contract to NHS England)
- Maintenance: Amey plc under contract to the Ministry of Justice
- Mental health: Inclusion - NHS Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust
- Substance misuse programme: Inclusion - NHS Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust
- Social care: Worcestershire County Council
- Visitor centre: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

Annex B

Table 1

Incidents of self-harm (4.2)

Year	Incidents Recorded	% increase on previous year
2022	414	11% increase
2023	524	27% increase
2024	664	27% increase

Table 2

Violent incidents and the effects of changing regimes (4.3)

Year	Incidents Recorded	Remarks
2019	183	Full regime before Covid-19
2020	62	Covid-19 restricted association. Illicit trading and consequent debt minimised
2021	93	Covid-19 restrictions eased. Increased association
2022	114	Further Covid-19 restrictions relaxed
2023	151	Regimes remain limited due to staff shortages
2024	219	Drone deliveries have increased access to drugs and other illicit items

Table 3

Use of force incidents (4.4)

Year	Incidents (Overall)	Incidents (CSRU)
2022	291	62
2023	337	57
2024	516	93
Notes	Policy change in 2024 included UoF and use of rigid bar handcuffs (RBH)	

Table 4

Deployment of use of force (4.4)

Occurrences	2024	2023
PAVA used	23	10
Baton draws/strikes	2	1
Assaults on staff	109	90
Injuries to staff	51	24
Injuries to prisoners	28	14

Table 5

Illicit items recovered (4.5)

Year	Total items Recovered	Drugs Finds	Phones and Accessories
2022	335	122	54
2023	480	131	161
2024	1421	275	711

Table 6

CSRU protected characteristics as at 31 December 2024 (5.2)

Prisoners:	28 (20 on R45, 2 on R46, 1 on R53/4, 5 on R55)
Open ACCT	3
Unlock level	L1:24 L2:2 L2 - BW:2
IEP status	Enhanced: 4 Standard: 8 Basic: 16
Age	Average: 38 Youngest: 23 Oldest: 72
Ethnicity	White: 18 Black:7 Mixed:1 Asian:2
Religion	Muslim: 12 Church of England: 3 Roman Catholic: 6 Jewish: 1 Pagan: 2 None: 4
Time in segregation	Average (of 28 prisoners): 78 days Longest (3 prisoners): 328 days; 238 days; 194 days Shortest (3 prisoners): 3 days; 7 days; 9 days

Table 7

Adjudications Statistics (5.2)

Year	Adjudications held	Adjudications proven	Remarks
2022	1421	496	35% proven
2023	1402	598	43% proven
2024	2448*	1616	66% proven

*New user friendly DPS entry system introduced

Table 8

DIRF Statistics

Year	DIRFs received	DIRFs investigated
2022	153	64
2023	169	123
2024	320	173



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