



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Isis**

**1 January 2024 to 31 December 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/YOI Isis is a public sector training prison for convicted men. It is a prison for young adults between 18 and 21 years, and category C adults (considered low risk, unlikely to escape or re-offend, and capable of benefiting from rehabilitative initiatives) up to 27 years old. In 2023, it was designated as the London hub prison for convicted young adult men, and the number of prisoners aged between 18 and 21 increased during the reporting year. In December 2024, the proportion of prisoners in this age range was 44%.

The prison is situated in Thamesmead, in south-east London. The certified normal accommodation (the number of prisoners a prison can hold without being crowded) is 478<sup>1</sup>, and the operational capacity – that is, the maximum population it can safely and decently hold – is 628. In December 2024, the population was around 580.

Prisoners are accommodated in two house blocks, Thames and Meridian, each comprising a central hub and four spurs. Each spur can accommodate over 70 prisoners, on three levels. Each spur has a servery, and outside each is an exercise yard with fitness equipment. Each houseblock has a laundry, operated by laundry orderlies.

In a block opposite the houseblocks is the academy, with 19 classrooms and a capacity in excess of 200, plus the skills zone, with six workshops; a library; a healthcare unit; and a multi-faith suite. Separately, there is a well-equipped gym, able to accommodate 40 prisoners; a cardiovascular studio; an indoor sports hall; and two outdoor astroturf pitches. The kitchen is managed by Mitie (a private company contracted to provide facilities management, including catering) with a workforce that includes 20+ prisoners.

Midway through 2024, the prison started the Peaceful Prison Project, with the aim of reducing violence and improving the regime for the peaceful majority of prisoners. It also aimed to challenge the assumption that prisoners can only feel safe if separated from their non-associates (prisoners with whom a particular prisoner may have conflict, sometimes due to gang allegiances). Consultations were held with staff and prisoners, including three away days for different groups of staff. Central to the project was the establishment of a Peace spur where prisoners with a record of non-violence and good behaviour and who signed a Peace Compact would have additional benefits, such as increased freedom to move around the prison, more time out of their cells and an outdoor seating area, and a Growth Spur, where prisoners who were most involved in violence would have a more restricted regime, coupled with an individual growth plan to support their reintegration into the mainstream prison population. Growth plans would include use of CSIPs (Challenge Support & Intervention Plans), key work, the Changing the Game course (a group programme for men who have been involved with gangs and serious violence), and conflict coaching. The Peace spur launched on 18 November and the Growth spur was ready to open by the end of the year.

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

- Violence in the prison increased markedly again this year. Data presented at the monthly safety, equalities and use of force meeting show 419 incidents of prisoner assaults and fights in 2024, compared with 319 recorded in 2023, an increase of 31%. Assaults on staff increased from 161 in 2023 to 207 in 2024, up 28%. The prison ascribed this to the increase in the proportion of prisoners aged between 18 and 21 from 32% of the prison population in January to 44% in December. During 2024, this demographic was over-represented in rates of violence and weapon possession.
- This was the first full year where officers had been trained in and issued with PAVA spray (an incapacitant spray similar to pepper spray). By the end of 2024, 87% of operational staff had been trained in the use of PAVA, and 95% of trained staff had been issued with PAVA: 144 staff in total. PAVA was drawn without use on 45 occasions in 2024 and used 121 times. Data from the prison for the full year showed that 63% of prisoners affected by PAVA were black, when black prisoners made up on average 45% of the prison population and were involved in 56% of all incidents.
- There was a slight increase in self-harm in 2024, with an average of 26 incidents per month compared with 21 per month in 2023, but lower than the 34 per month in 2021. The most frequent form of self-harm recorded was cutting, followed by the use of a ligature. The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2024 was slightly higher than in 2023, with 144 opened compared to 133 the previous year. As in 2023, the quality of ACCTs observed on monitoring visits remained variable, with some up to date and others missing entries, particularly the detail around 'quality' conversations and interactions.
- The prison was not able to provide us with any analysis about emergency cell bell answering - either performance or procedures. IMB analysis showed that the average and median times to answer cell bells in the house blocks in August was beyond the five minutes required in the Notice to Staff (NTS 53.18) guidance - the most recent we could find. Furthermore, the analysis shows peaks in the times to answer at around 9am and 1pm - coinciding with morning meetings and lunchtime. We are concerned that this puts prisoners at risk if they are unwell or in danger.

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

- Data from the prison's monthly safety, equality and use of force meeting shows that black prisoners are disproportionately involved in violence and multiple prisoner fights and, possibly as a consequence, the disproportionately high use of PAVA spray on them. The underlying causes of this are not clear.

- The general standard of cleanliness of the spurs continued to be of concern. In particular, serveries were often left overnight with dirty pans and remnants of food from the previous day.
- The statistics on Segregation Unit occupancy have been produced on a rolling basis in previous years, but in 2024, the monthly detail was produced retrospectively in the last few months of the year. This does undermine confidence in the prison's own statistics as entirely complete and reliable. The number of prisoners on ACCTs held in the unit was 40, a significant increase on 2023's 25. Having observed a 47% increase from 2022 to 2023, the 2024 data suggest a trend is emerging, particularly given the decrease in total segregation occupants. The Board remains concerned that prisoners with serious mental health problems were held in the Segregation Unit, often whilst waiting for an appropriate transfer to a specialist hospital, as the prison has no in-patient facility.
- Given the time that prisoners in the Segregation Unit spend in their cells, the poorly fitting windows there have a considerable impact, but we understand that this unit is not currently prioritised in the schedule of works to repair cell windows.
- In 2023, attendance at Friday prayers for Muslim prisoners was restricted to attending by spur once every six weeks. This has significantly improved during 2024, allowing prisoners to attend prayers, by houseblock, every other week; however, the aim remains to offer all Muslim prisoners the option to attend Friday prayers every week. Prison officers' availability continues to have an adverse impact on Christian Sunday services, which are often cancelled on the day. This affects the Anglican and other Christian denominations, with the exception of the Roman Catholic population. Having been raised in 2023, this remains a concern for the Board, as staff availability can be unpredictable.
- The incentive scheme (a system of privileges that can be increased or taken away, made up of enhanced, standard and basic levels, to incentivise prisoners to abide by the rules and engage in the prison regime and rehabilitation) was reviewed by the prison in the closing months of 2023, and a new scheme, called the Incentives and Personal Improvement (Rehabilitative Culture) (IPI) scheme came into force on 12 February. The revised scheme aimed to allow for the neurodevelopmental stage of young prisoners, taking into account that the adolescent brain responds better to reward rather than punishment. The basic level changed to limit prisoners' access to their in-cell phones, as well as the previous penalties. A new enhanced 2 level was introduced with additional benefits.
- Prisoner property remains a concern for the Board. Prisoner complaints about property were, at 28% of all complaints, by far the most common, and 22% (45) of IMB applications concerned property, with over half of them (12%) relating to property during transfer or in another facility.

## **Health and wellbeing**

- The number of prisoners not attending for their healthcare appointments ('did not attend' or DNAs) was high throughout the year, but not as high as in 2023, and the percentage of DNAs was reducing in most clinics. This followed a number of steps put in place to encourage attendance. These included the GP, ANP (advanced nurse practitioner) and Nurse clinics moving to the house blocks (something that isn't possible for dental, optician and some sexual health appointments). The in-cell phone is used to remind prisoners of their appointments and confirm their intention to attend. 'Red band' prisoners (those with a greater degree of trust and autonomy in their jobs in the prison) have been used to check on prisoners due at clinics.
- The prison's focus on assisting neurodiverse prisoners is hampered by lack of coordination between healthcare and the neurodiversity support manager, as a result of healthcare's inability to share confidential information about diagnosis.
- The amount of time that prisoners are locked in their cells remains a problem, with prisoners' time out of cell typically being five hours a day from Monday to Thursday, and at most two and a half hours for the remaining three days. This is far less than the HMIP recommendation that prisoners should have a minimum of 10 hours out of cell each day.
- The Board was particularly concerned about prisoners who were on separate regimes (those kept separate from the rest of the prison population, usually because of the risk of violence from other prisoners with whom they had conflict, sometimes kept separate at their own request). These prisoners were only allowed out of their cells when other prisoners were locked up, and so may be out of their cells for as little as 30 minutes a day. This is a similar time to prisoners in the Segregation Unit, but without the routine support that segregated prisoners receive.

## **Progression and resettlement**

- Prisoners' educational attainment improved in 2024. This is partly because the regime allowed prisoners to attend more education and training sessions, but also due to higher staffing and improved teaching quality. During 2024, 817 prisoners successfully completed courses out of 954 enrolments – an 86% success rate. The 2024 success rates by subject improved on 2023: English was 88% (2023: 70%); Maths 78% (2023: 73%) and vocational courses 86% (2023: 85%).
- Attendance at education facilities in HMP/YOI Isis has shown improvement in 2024, but on some occasions staff shortages meant that prisoners were unable to attend Academy/Skill Zone sessions.
- As in previous years, offender management and progression were heavily impacted by staffing and resource issues. Completion of offender assessment system plans (OASys, used to assess the risks and needs of prisoners), and general contact with offender management unit (OMU) staff through surgeries, were hindered by staff shortages and additional workload demands (e.g. the early release schemes). Key work also remained limited.

- The prison coped well with the early release schemes that were implemented during 2024, although the resource-intensive nature of planning for those releases had an impact on other areas of delivery (e.g. prisoner contact with their offender manager, frequency of OMU surgeries). Good communication between different departments meant that all prisoners who were released early were able to complete their education courses before release.
- While there was a range of internal teams and external organisations providing support for resettlement and rehabilitation, further work could be done to improve visibility of these resources to maximise take-up. Also, systematic data aggregation and analysis of post-release outcomes would enable better monitoring of the effectiveness of interventions.

### **3.2 Main areas for development**

#### ***TO THE MINISTER***

Young adult prisoners, those aged between 18 and 21 years old, are proportionally responsible for perpetrating more violence in prison and are more likely to be victims of it. Individual prisons appear to make decisions about how many such offenders they will take, apparently without involvement from the MoJ, which is one of the reasons for the increase of prisoners in this age group at HMP/YOI Isis and the consequent increase in violence. What is the MoJ strategy for the management of young adults in the prison estate?

Gang culture and knife crime are issues that ripple between the local community and prison. What plans are there for a strategy that aims to reduce violence among young offenders in the community before they are sentenced, after sentencing and after their sentence is over?

As the data gathered for this report show, young adult prisoners are proportionally more likely to be involved in staff and prisoner assaults and more likely to own and use weapons. Managing their behaviour is resource intensive. How will the Minister allocate the necessary resources for this age group in HMP/YOI Isis?

#### ***TO THE PRISON SERVICE***

Lack of staff is having a detrimental effect on many of the prison's commitments, such as key work. What level of staffing is necessary to resource HMP/YOI Isis and what is being done to address any shortfall?

Assessing the outcome of all the various programmes to rehabilitate prisoners and reduce reoffending is very difficult without through the gate information. Does the prison service have reoffending rates for specific prisons and, if not, what will the prison service do to obtain reoffending rates for different prisons?

What research has been done into the reasons why black young men are disproportionately involved in violence including multiple prisoner fights and how can this be disseminated to prisons like HMP/YOI Isis, for whom this is a major factor in the levels of violence?



Planning for early release schemes and other changes diverts significant (and already stretched) OMU resources away from delivering the normal workload. If similar schemes can be expected in the future, how will the MoJ ensure that staff in the prison and probation service are adequately supported such that the prisoners not within the scope of these schemes do not experience a reduction in the support available, due to limited resources being diverted elsewhere?

## **TO THE GOVERNOR**

From our investigation into emergency cell bells (ECB) in the prison, we would like to know:

- With regard to ECBs, how is the prison monitoring whether the guidance in the Prison Officers' Guide 2023 is being followed?
- What alternative methods are there for bringing urgent but not emergency issues to the attention of officers?
- Who is responsible for attending when an ECB is rung over the lunch period or during morning briefings – times when our investigation shows that the time taken to answer is very long?

We are concerned with the over-representation of black men in metrics for staff assaults, prisoner assaults, weapon ownership and being affected by PAVA spray. Will the Governor instigate a deep-dive study into the reasons for this?

Every winter we receive complaints from prisoners in the Segregation Unit about cold temperatures in their cells. These prisoners are confined to their cells for 23 hours a day and so are especially affected by cell temperatures. When will the window repairs in the Segregation Unit be carried out? Should they be recognised as a priority, compared with other areas of the prison?

### **3.3 Response to last report**

<b>Issue raised with the Minister</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
As the Board has said in every annual report since 2018, prisoner property continues to be a problem, particularly property on transfer between prisons. The aim of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework is to improve the management of property, but this has not been met. The manual, paper-based system is error-prone and inefficient. It relies on the	I understand the Board's long-standing concerns about prisoners' property despite implementation of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework in September 2022. The Framework places an emphasis on ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits, since anything within these limits will be transferred with the prisoner and avoid the problems you describe with sending on excess items. As part of the planning for the current Prisoner Escort Custody Services (PECS)	Prisoner property continues to be a problem. Over one in five of prisoners' applications to the IMB were about property as were 28% of all complaints to the prison made by prisoners.

<p>manual recording of tags on prisoner property bags and handwritten property cards, which are sometimes illegible, incomplete and inaccurate. Will the minister allocate funding to digitise the system?</p>	<p>contract, PECS engaged with the Ministry of Justice to review property limits on transportation, and it was agreed that the new vehicle fleet would have increased capacity to facilitate an additional half bag of property for consumables to the limit of 7.5kg. The vehicle fleet is designed to transfer the number of prisoners intended together with their property in line with the volumetric limit. In addition, the PECS Supplier shall transfer a reasonable volume of legal documentation.</p>	
<p>Staffing levels continue to impact many aspects of the prison regime, partly due to a high level of ineffective staff, i.e. staff who are unavailable for prison duties due to sickness or other reasons. This impacts prisoners' access to training and education, healthcare and faith services. Will the minister increase the prison's headcount buffer for ineffective staff to allow the regime to be fully resourced?</p>	<p>I appreciate the Board's concerns about staffing levels at HMP/YOI Isis. Recruitment over the last twelve months (30 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) has seen the overall staffing level at the prison increase from 277.7 full time equivalent (FTE) staff to 302.1 against a target of 292.3. Operational band 3-5 staffing levels over the same period also shows an increase from 161.6 to 175 against a target of 167.5 FTE staff. The increase in staffing has enabled the focus to shift from recruitment to retention. The introduction of New Colleague Mentors from March 2023 has provided a significant increase in support of all new starters. A new induction process has been implemented which aims to ensure that onboarding of staff is of a high quality, and that they have an allocated buddy during their first twelve months of their career for support.</p> <p>It is recognised that sick levels at HMP/YOI Isis was higher than the national target, however this has decreased slightly to an average of 0.85 days per person. The management of</p>	<p>Inconsistent and insufficient staffing levels remained a problem during 2024 and on many occasions the prison was insufficiently staffed to be able to deliver the regime.</p>

	<p>sickness and restricted duties remains a high priority for the senior leadership team at HMP/YOI Isis with weekly attendance meetings being used to discuss cases to provide assurance that action is being taken and interventions are being applied appropriately to support staff back to work. Using absence data from the previous twelve months, managers are working with Human Resources to identify trends to understand where wellbeing interventions may be appropriate to tackle the main reasons for absence making sure that all support is in place but that a work focused approach is being taken to encourage staff to return once fit to do so. The prison will also be part of a new London wellbeing pilot undertaken by the Ministry of Justice to help raise awareness of health and wellbeing activities available to staff which it is hoped will aid prevention of illness and lower sickness levels together with better resourcing for the regime.</p>	
<b>Issue raised with the Prison Service</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>Loss of prisoner property continues to be a problem, and the Prisoner Property Policy Framework has not improved this. How will the Prison Service improve processes and technology to ensure that prisoners' property is not lost?</p>	<p>The introduction of the digitally recorded Person Escort Record includes a property section that accurately records the number and type of sealed property 'owned' by and transferred with the prisoner and an accurate record of property handover. This is now embedded as business as usual. The digital process has assisted with investigations for property that is lost in transit with PECS suppliers. PECS also reviews complaints during formal monthly meetings with their</p>	<p>Prisoner property continues to be a problem and there has been no improvement in 2024. Over one in five of prisoners' applications to the IMB were about property as were 28% of all complaints to the prison made by prisoners.</p> <p>The digital Person Escort Record is not used within the prison, only by the prisoner transport company and the error-</p>

	<p>suppliers. For property delay, in-line with the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Prisoner Property Framework, if the limit of items allowed in possession has been reached, and if there is no space on the escort vehicle to transport items safely and securely, then responsibility for transfer of any remaining items remains with the sending prison. As identified by the Board, HMP/YOI Isis local complaints processes are robust with appropriate escalation methods in place. Further liaison with sending prisons will take place to ensure property transfer is improved.</p>	<p>prone hand-written transcription of property details between property cards continues to be used.</p>
<p>Since at least 2014, the Board has drawn attention to the need for prisons receiving prisoners from the courts to complete an initial sentence plan (OASys) before onward transfer. The current system is clearly not working. How will the Prison Service address this and ensure that every prisoner on arrival at HMP/YOI Isis comes with a sentence plan that will enable him to begin the process of rehabilitation?</p>	<p>Offender Assessment System (OASys) Further to last years' response, the OASys taskforce have been supporting HMP/YOI Isis in reducing the backlog of OASys reports since January 2024. The OASys taskforce funded and completed 132 of the 235 Start Custody OASys reports between January and July 2024 and will continue to support the prison over the coming months to address the backlog. This is a priority area for the governor and an effective local tracker and management system is in place to reduce the backlog.</p>	<p>The backlog of OASys assessments did decrease during the first half of 2024, but then the increased work load of OMU staff caused by early release schemes (ECSL70 and SDS40) and HDC changes led to the backlog growing again and it was back up to around 70 by the end of 2024.</p> <p>Prisoners are still arriving at HMP/YOI Isis without OASys having been completed, hampering prisoners' progression.</p>
<p>The windows in prisoners' cells are still a problem even though a solution has been found. Only six cells had their windows renovated in 2023. Can the Prison Service assure us that that the remaining windows will be fixed in 2024?</p>	<p>Cell Windows The first six windows completed in December 2023, as highlighted in the report, were a trial run to confirm that the components were suitable and robust enough for the works required. Once this was confirmed, the remaining units were fitted from 12 February 2024 and completed on 12 March 2024 (70 units in total). A</p>	<p>A total of 170 cell windows had been completed by the end of 2024. However, this is still fewer than half the cells and we still receive complaints from prisoners about the temperatures in their cells – too cold in winter and too hot in summer. The cells in the Segregation Unit in particular are very cold</p>

	further bid has been submitted to replace the mechanism units and hinges to a further 100 windows in the 2024/25 budget.	and prisoners have been complaining to the IMB about it for many years.
The only HMPPS accredited programme run at HMP/YOI Isis is the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) and prisoners must move to another prison if their sentence plan requires that they take other courses. Can the Prison Service authorise and facilitate the running of a wider range of accredited programmes at HMP/YOI Isis?	<p>Accredited Programmes</p> <p>HMP/YOI Isis received additional Offending Behaviour Programmes (OBP) investment in 2019 to double accredited OBP capacity. This investment was used to increase the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) and Resolve outcomes from six to twelve groups per year (increased from 42 completions per year to 84). However, based on identified demand, some investment was also used to train staff in Identity Matters, a programme for those with gang affiliation. Resolve was decommissioned in 2022 as there was an identified overlap between Resolve and TSP, which also covers those with violent convictions. Identity Matters has remained an option for HMP/YOI Isis to deliver alongside scope to increase TSP delivery in place of resource previously utilised for Resolve.</p> <p>Demand for accredited programmes remains under review. The most recent data from HMP/YOI Isis indicated that TSP and Identity Matters remained the most relevant programmes for their population. At present there is only very limited demand for Kaizen and delivery of this programme would not be viable and the most effective option is to consider prison transfers to other specialist delivery sites. The review also indicated some potential demand for the 'New Me Strengths' programme which is designed for those with</p>	The Thinking Skills Programme is still the only accredited programme to operate in HMP/YOI Isis.

	<p>learning difficulties and challenges, though this would require additional training. HMP/YOI Isis has continued to review the needs data on site to identify which programmes are viable.</p> <p>Furthermore, HMPPS is currently testing a new programme which aims to support greater flexibility for prisons delivering accredited programmes to cater for a broader range of risk and offending types, without the need for additional training in a different programme or transfer where a prison does not run the full suite of programmes. This will support addressing the Board's concerns for the need to transfer to other prisons to access different accredited programmes.</p>	
<b>Issue raised with the Governor</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Can the Governor ensure that data regarding separate and restricted regimes is collated and analysed to provide a better understanding of these regimes' use and impact?	We do not have sufficient resources for additional data gathering. Instead, we have focussed on reducing the numbers of separate regimes and monitoring individuals who are on a separate regime at the weekly Safer Communities Meeting with a view always to resolving the issue and ending the regime. The opening of the Growth Spur should have a positive impact on the number of separate regimes instigated by the prison.	We have observed no progress in this area, despite raising the issue in rota reports and meetings. On monitoring visits, we often note that between five and 10 prisoners are on separate regimes in each house block, some of them voluntarily because they feel they would be unsafe in the general prison population. Prisoners on restricted regimes may only get half an hour a day out of their cells.
How will the Governor monitor, analyse and report on prisoners' time out of cell and engagement in purposeful activities?	We provide daily data on activity attendance at our morning operational briefing and have comprehensive information on attendance at all activities within the prison.	The Board remains concerned about the amount of time that prisoners are locked in their cells.

Can the Governor ensure that processes for making sure that cell bells are answered in the specified times are followed and monitored?	We accept that this is an area of concern for the IMB and will consider how we can best address the issue.	There was no progress on this over the year and as a Board we undertook our own analysis as a basis for discussion with the prison. This showed that the last available guidance to Prison Officers about answering ECBs was not being met.
Will the Governor ensure that the regime allows sufficient time at the end of the day to allow cleaners to properly clean the serveries and remove any uneaten food?	This is a difficult issue to resolve given current resourcing constraints. Our ability to have cleaners out past evening lock up time is affected both by low numbers of staffing on the evening duty and the requirement to focus resource we do have on processing late receptions.	Serveries are still not being cleaned until the following day, so waste food is left out overnight, encouraging vermin.

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

During 2024 the number of prisoners telling the IMB that they felt unsafe increased, and in the second half of the year, for the first time, the IMB received a number of communications from prisoners' family members expressing concern about their prisoner relative's safety. A survey of prison officers showed that 48% felt unsafe in the prison. This appears to be a result of:

- A 31% increase in the level of violence in the prison compared to 2023. The prison ascribed this to the increase in the proportion of prisoners aged between 18 and 21 from 32% of the prison population in January to 44% in December. During 2024, this demographic was over-represented in rates of violence and weapon possession. For example, in April 39% of the prison population were aged 18-21 but they were responsible for 56% of prisoner assaults and fights and 72% of staff assaults. In the same month this age group made up 68% of weapons owners or users.
- The start of the Peaceful Prison Project, which included a change in the prison's approach to managing potential conflict between prisoners. During the first nine months of the year, the allocation of prisoners to cells took into account their non-associates, i.e. other prisoners with whom they might have conflict, often due to different gang allegiances. This complicated the logistics of cell allocation and also resulted in members of the same gang often being located together on the same spur with detrimental consequences for the illicit economy. From the end of August, prisoners were allocated to cells based on which cell became available, irrespective of their gang allegiances, unless there was evidence of conflict with named individuals. There was an increase in violence in September following this change, and although the level in subsequent months was lower than September, it was still higher than in the first eight months of the year, as shown in graphs 3 and 4 in Annex B.

The prison's Safer Custody team collates data on safety, violence and drug use, which is presented at a monthly, multi-disciplinary Safety, Equalities and Use of Force meeting. The data is largely based on data from the HMPPS Incident Reporting System (IRS), though an analyst produces the use of force data from incident reports in the prison's daily briefing sheet and by viewing video footage of all incidents. These datasets form the basis of the data and graphs in this report.

#### 4.1 Reception and induction

##### Reception

HMP/YOI Isis continues to receive young men between the ages of 18 and 27 three – sometimes four – days a week from a reception prison and not direct from court. During 2024 a large percentage of intake were between the ages of 18 to 21, including young men with life sentences and a small number of convicted prisoners awaiting sentencing.

The number of transfers into HMP/YOI Isis during 2024 totalled 1038, which compares with 909 in 2023, 982 in 2022 and 797 in 2021. Reception activity data for 2024 is shown in Annex B (see table 1).



On arrival at reception, prisoners were kept awaiting entry in the conveyance bus on average under an hour, although the wait could be somewhat longer at busy times and for lunchtime arrivals.

The majority of prisoners surveyed by the IMB after their first night commented that they were professionally dealt with on arrival. This was backed up by IMB observations. On admission, personal details and property are checked, any clothing necessary issued and each prisoner is given a body scan. They are seen by a member of the Safer Custody team and given a first-night health assessment by the healthcare nurse.

Prisoners arriving without some or all of their property continues to be a problem; officers told the IMB that this is exacerbated if they have shown resistance to being transferred. If their property does not arrive with them, officers normally give assistance by making contact with the dispatch prison, although at busy times prisoners report that this is not always taking place.

Distribution of handed-in property has taken four to six weeks to be given to prisoners, due to a shortage of dog handlers to check the items, cross-deployment and shortage of officers' availability. Wherever possible, arrangements are made for prisoners to collect their property direct from reception to avoid discrepancies.

The reception areas, including the holding rooms, continue to be kept generally clean. On occasions, however, the toilet facilities needed more attention and were not checked between offloading new buses of prisoners.

## **Inductions**

Following assessment in reception, prisoners are taken direct to the Induction Spur. In an IMB survey of 300 new arrivals, 87% indicated they were made welcome by officers and prisoner representatives.

They are allocated cells, given canteen, telephone pin, bedding and evening meal. Due to regime commitments, showers are not normally provided. Induction Reps and a prison Listener (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) are available to assist the new arrivals with any initial problems. Hourly first night welfare observations are made between 10pm and 8am. The following day, the men have secondary health screening and are then seen by various agencies for induction.

The location for Inductions was changed from the multi-faith Chaplaincy to the visits hall in June 2024, which created problems with some agencies' schedules, coupled with regime restrictions and irregular timings. Changes took time to bed-in, but following the appointment of an induction custodial manager, together with an induction officer, improvements have gradually been implemented. In particular, the OMU inductions have been revamped, together with a very informative Induction booklet issued to all prisoners.

Prisoners have encountered problems with the use of the three biometric stations, with queues forming, especially when one station is out of action. The men have

limited association time to include showering and use of biometrics, which can be slowed by new prisoners not familiar with their operation.

IMB inspections found the cleanliness of cells offered to new arrivals unsatisfactory during the earlier part of the year, but standards had greatly improved later in the year. The general condition of the cells appears depressing, with a need for redecoration. It is understood a programme of painting and maintaining a higher standard should take place in 2025.

Prisoners are normally on the induction spur for around two weeks, during which they also receive Chaplaincy, Change Grow Live (a voluntary sector organisation specialising in substance misuse and criminal justice intervention), education and gym inductions.

## **4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

There was an increase in self-harm in 2024, with an average of 26 incidents per month, compared with 21 per month in 2023, but lower than the 34 per month in 2021. The month-by-month comparison between 2023 and 2024 is shown in annex B (see graph two). The figures may be skewed by the actions of a single prisoner. For example, a single prisoner was responsible for nine acts of self-harm in June. The most frequent form of self-harm recorded was cutting, followed by the use of a ligature.

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents (ACCTs, used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) opened during 2024 was slightly higher than in 2023, with 144 opened compared to 133 the previous year: the monthly comparison is shown in graph one in annex B. As in 2023, the quality of ACCTs observed on monitoring visits remains variable, with some up to date and others missing entries, particularly the detail around 'quality' conversations and interactions. IMB weekly monitoring reports to the prison have highlighted this.

The Samaritans-led Listener programme had an average of 11 call-outs per month during the reporting year. The number of Listeners fluctuated: there were eight at the end of the year, with additional Listeners due to graduate in January 2025. Reasons for call-outs included: adjudications; bereavement; family issues and isolation/loneliness.

There were no deaths in custody during 2024.

## **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

Violence in the prison increased markedly again this year. Data presented at the monthly Safety, Equalities and Use of Force meeting show 419 incidents of prisoner assaults and fights in 2024, compared with 319 recorded in 2023, an increase of 31%. Assaults on staff increased from 161 in 2023 to 207 in 2024, up 28%. A graph showing the variation of violence across the year is shown in annex B (see graph 3). The trend for prisoner assaults and fights rose over the course of the year, whereas the trend for prisoner-on-staff assaults was roughly flat.

A PAVA overview report, written by the London Prison Group safety lead, based on data from April to November stated that HMP/YOI Isis ranked sixth highest nationally for use of force per 1,000 prisoners and that within its comparator group, it ranked second highest for prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and third highest for staff assaults per 1,000 prisoners.

The number of weapons found more than doubled in 2024, from an average of about 23 a month in 2023 to just over 57 a month this year, as shown in graph five in annex B. Worryingly, the proportion of weapons found that were used increased during 2024 from 19% in January to 38% in December. Common weapons included 'metal related items', objects in socks (frequently toilet bolts), plugs on leads and razor blades melted into toothbrushes.

Actions to counteract weapon production included replacing metal wastepaper bins in cells and metal toilet bolts with plastic equivalents. In December, the prison was one of the first tranche of prisons in the government project to replace wet shave razors using razor blades with electric razors.

The prison ran a number of initiatives to address weapon use during the year. Weapons debriefs (meetings held with prisoners and prison staff) were held in August with 31 prisoners and in October with 50 prisoners. The October findings included, out of the 50 prisoners surveyed:

- 56% of the prisoners felt unsafe in the prison;
- 38% of the prisoners had the weapon because they felt unsafe;
- 72% of the prisoners felt that it was easy to get a weapon at HMP/YOI Isis, this had increased from 35% in August;
- 44% of the prisoners said that they had made the weapon themselves, and 64% said that it would cost up to £50 to buy a weapon in the prison.

The number of prisoners on challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs), which are used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence, increased over the course of the year, as shown in graph six in annex B. The head of Safer Custody carried out regular quality-assurance checks on CSIPs. Many of the areas for improvement were a consequence of the case manager having insufficient time, such as long gaps between reviews or plans not being updated to reflect reviews. Where they were completed to a high standard and regularly reviewed, CSIPs had good outcomes. A sample of 20 prisoners, assessed two months before and two months after a CSIP was opened, indicated a positive change in behaviour, for example:

- 75% of the sampled prisoners had fewer adjudications post-CSIP;
- 70% had fewer negative incentive scheme outcomes post-CSIP;
- At the time of the assessment, 30% of the prisoners were at the enhanced incentive scheme level and 60% on standard.

Weapons awareness weeks were held in January and June. These included weapons forums with groups of prisoners, and discussions with prisoners about amnesty bins.

During Safety Week in November, activities included:

- a staff coffee morning, where staff were able to complete a safety survey;

- several forums for prisoners, covering key topics with the Safer Custody Team such as CSIP, violence, personal safety, and weapons;
- sessions with prisoners and representatives from Unlock My Life, an external charity dedicated to supporting men in prison who struggle with mental health challenges.

Weapons amnesty bins, where prisoners could give up weapons without sanction, were trialled in June and November. The prison reported that there were issues with prisoners' trust in the system, but three weapons were handed in in June and eight in November.

Throughout the year, criminal justice charity, Belong, ran a conflict coach programme – selecting, training and supporting prisoners as conflict coaches who aim to mediate between prisoners who have conflict. The conflict coaches were supported by two older prisoners, outside the usual age range for the prison, whose transfer into the prison was facilitated by the Men of Purpose project. The aim was to provide a mature role model for the young men.

#### **4.4 Use of force**

The use of force increased over the course of the year at a faster rate than the increase in violence, as shown in graph four in annex B. This was the first full year where officers had been trained in and issued with PAVA spray (an incapacitant spray similar to pepper spray). By the end of the year, 87% of staff had been trained in the use of PAVA, and 95% of trained staff had been issued with PAVA, a total of 144 staff. PAVA was drawn without use on 45 occasions in 2024 and used 121 times. PAVA use was higher in the final four months of the year, following the change in cell allocation policy in August (see graph eight in annex B). In the eight months to August, PAVA was used an average of seven times a month, from September to December an average of 17 times a month. The use of rigid bar handcuffs increased from 2023, being used 46 times a month on average, compared to 21.5 times a month on average between May and December 2023. Batons were drawn 14 times and used nine times in 2024, compared to 23 and three the previous year. The Board were informed that no cuff pain compliance was used. However, late in the production of this report the board became aware that the Use of Force dashboard, produced by the HMPPS Operational Response & Resilience Unit, reported that pain-inducing techniques were used 44 times. The Board are investigating the reason for this difference in the two figures.

Routine use of body worn video cameras (BWVCs) decreased slightly over the course of the year. On average, 48 BWVCs were taken each month, about 91% of staff on shift taking them. Some footage was available for an average of 83% of incidents, compared with 88% last year. On average 72% of non-compliance restraints had footage from before the start of the incident.

The prison reviews all use of force incidents at a weekly meeting chaired by the Deputy Governor, at which CCTV and BWVC footage is viewed for all incidents where it is available. The London Prison Group safety lead's review of the use of PAVA at HMP/YOI Isis states that this process is good, as 100% of incidents are reviewed, above the mandatory requirement, and the prison has one of the highest numbers of use of force incidents captured on BWVC across the region. When

observed by an IMB member, the meeting was thorough, methodical and objective. It considers the actions of individual prison officers, and where necessary recommends training in use of force techniques. During 2024, no disciplinary action was recommended.

The IMB are concerned about the increase in the use of PAVA spray in the prison and analysed the prison use of force data to try to answer the following questions:

- Was there evidence of particular officers over-using PAVA spray?
- Was the use of PAVA spray becoming the first reaction to a violent incident rather than the last resort?

During the year, 57 different officers used PAVA spray and a further 10 drew it without use. The maximum number of times that PAVA spray was used by an officer over the course of the year was five, and this was just one officer. Another three officers used PAVA spray four times in 2024. The weekly use of force review meeting assessed that these uses of PAVA were justified. In the view of the Board, there is no evidence of individual officers over-using PAVA.

There were indications that PAVA use was becoming the first reaction to an incident:

- Over the course of the year the trend was towards the use of PAVA in incidents involving fewer prisoners. The number of prisoners involved in incidents where PAVA was used is shown in graph nine in annex B. In this graph each point represents an incident. The trend line shows that over the course of the year the trend was towards the use of PAVA in incidents involving fewer prisoners.
- Analysis of incidents involving four or more prisoners showed that PAVA was used in 47% of such incidents in the first half of the year and 81% in the second half. In the last two months of the year PAVA was used in all incidents where four or more prisoners were involved.

Part of the reason for the increased use of PAVA over the course of the year may have been that the training of new officers includes the use of PAVA spray as a standard technique, so it is more readily used. This is borne out by the London Prison Group safety lead's review of the use of PAVA at HMP/YOI Isis. This states:

*"In relation to staff confidence in using C&R [control and restraint] instead of PAVA there was a clear divide between newer staff and staff with experience. Experienced staff expressed they don't generally feel that need to draw PAVA as quickly as the newer staff or not at all. They stated that for new staff it seems to be the "go to" and they have to be told to put it away as it is not needed. Staff that had worked in Wandsworth prior to Isis noted that incident response could also be a factor in staffing using PAVA, as for example in Wandsworth there would be a lot more staff to respond to an incident and the response tends to be quick due to the layout."*

The prison see PAVA spray as an effective technique for stopping incidents and preventing prisoner and staff injuries. The Prison Group safety lead's report says:

*"All staff agreed that when they had used PAVA they had felt it was the only course of action and the most cited situations were multi-person fights, weapons, serious staff assaults and when the situation feels generally out of*

*control referencing an incident in academy where there were rival gangs in a fight and only 2 officers present.*

*Staff felt that PAVA is effective as when you shout PAVA prisoners tend to scatter straight away so it does diffuse large scale incidents quickly.”*

Following the use of PAVA, a member of the healthcare team attends and checks each prisoner affected. Prisoners are typically taken out to the exercise yard so they can get fresh air. PAVA affects mainly the eyes and the effects last 30-40 minutes. The primary care manager was not aware of any long-term adverse reactions at HMP/YOI Isis, but said that some prisoners may be vulnerable to a reaction to PAVA if, for example, they have asthma or other respiratory conditions. Also, prisoners who are mentally ill or neuro-divergent may find their conditions exacerbated.

Data from the prison for the full year, shown in graph 10 in annex B, showed that 63% of prisoners affected by PAVA were from the B1 (Caribbean), B2 (African) and B9 (any other black background) ethnic groups, while these groups represented on average 45% of the prison population and were involved in 56% of all violent incidents. The Board was concerned about the over-representation of black prisoners in these figures and undertook further analysis of the use of force data in “large” incidents involving four or more prisoners, whether PAVA was used or not, which showed that:

- there was no indication that PAVA was more frequently used in incidents involving prisoners from the B1, B2 and B9 ethnic groups than those involving other groups;
- the proportion of prisoners from the B1, B2 and B9 ethnic groups involved in these incidents was 63%, which is the same as the proportion affected by PAVA

This analysis provides a rationale for the over-representation, but we feel further investigation of the over-representation of black prisoners in violence and use of force, especially the significant over-representation in those affected by PAVA, is required, and the Board will be monitoring this more closely over the next year.

#### **4.5 Preventing illicit items**

The prison adopted a number of ways of preventing illicit items. The full-body scanner in reception aims to ensure any illegal items are identified when new prisoners transfer into HMP/YOI Isis. All incoming post and parcels are tested; all staff and official visitors enter through airport-style security; and sniffer dogs, an X-ray scanner and an itemiser (a device that detects illicit drugs) are used to check all goods delivered to the prison.

The prison’s drug strategy, published early in 2024, identifies three priorities:

- Restricting supply
- Reducing demand
- Building recovery

The actions to be taken to reduce supply included an effective searching programme of staff, prisoners and cells, dedicated search teams (DST) three times a month and a 'hooch dog' (to detect alcohol illegally brewed in the prison), provision of visible physical security, a hunter mobile phone detector, maintaining resources in visits and reducing supply through the mail. Bi-monthly drug strategy meetings monitored progress, attendees included the head of security, representatives from the healthcare substance misuse services team and members of the interventions team.

From August, staff and visitors were not allowed to bring unsealed liquids into the prison, including vapes.

Data from the safety diagnostics tool shows that the number of drugs finds in the prison during the reporting year was double the number found in the previous year: there were 288 drugs finds and 21 alcohol-related finds in 2024, compared with 142 and 20 in 2023.

Mandatory drug tests restarted in April 2024. During 2024, 184 random drug tests were carried out and 32 on suspicion. 34% were positive; the most common drugs detected were cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids.

Intelligence-led cell searches are used to find illicit items. There were 428 searches in 2024, compared with 456 in 2023. Over 2,000 illicit items were found during the reporting year, with an increasing trend through the year, as shown in annex B (see graph seven). The most common items found were improvised weapons, drug and alcohol related finds, including cannabis, spice (a chemical compound that mimics the effects of the active ingredient in cannabis) and fermenting liquids, bank details and USBs (a computer memory storage device).

#### **4.6 Emergency cell bells (ECB) investigation March - December 2024**

##### Background

Over the course of 2024, the IMB undertook a review of ECB usage. This included:

- A review of guidance available to staff on responding to cell bells.
- Observations of members undertaking monitoring visits between May and June 2024, including reporting of comments made by individual prisoners and staff.
- Data analysis of cell bell logs for two periods (1st-23rd August 2024 and 13 consecutive but unspecified days in November).

The Board found the following:

- We were not able to identify what current guidance is given to prison officers on the time in which an ECB must be answered.
- Previous guidance at HMP/YOI Isis, Notice to Staff (NTS 53.18), said that communications room staff would contact the house block supervising officer after an ECB had been unanswered for 5 minutes and tell them that it requires immediate attention.
- IMB analysis shows that the average time to answer an ECB in the house blocks in August was 19.6 minutes; the median in August was 9.1 minutes.

- The analysis shows peaks in the average time to answer at around 9am and 1pm.
- A disproportionate number of calls come from a small number of cells; for example, in August, 25% of the calls were from just 33 cells.
- IMB members' monitoring of the reasons prisoners rang their ECB showed that the vast majority were for routine requests, such as for toilet rolls. However, the IMB were told by prisoners of two incidents where the ECB was rung for a medical emergency and not answered promptly.
- When prisoners are locked in their cells for long periods, there is no way for them to make routine requests other than using their ECBs. The Board are concerned that this may create a culture where answering ECBs is not seen as an emergency with consequent risk that a real emergency may be missed.

The results of our analysis are shown in Annex C.



## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

The cleanliness of all the spurs remains a concern, especially the serveries where the hygiene standard needed improvement. Fortnightly checks by the prison and inspections by IMB confirm that unwashed dirty food trays, coupled with remains of food from the previous night, were still frequently visible the following day. This practice encourages vermin and is unacceptable.

Food trolleys being returned to the kitchen have shown some improvement. On some occasions, however, when returned they had not been cleaned, had dirty trays and more than once included vermin. Hand soap and towels were not always replenished in the serveries.

Despite efforts by the kitchen manager, workers collecting food from the kitchen were often not wearing PPE. Temperature logs recording temperatures prior to serving were being completed.

Each house block has a prisoners' personal laundry run by prisoner orderlies, which operated well.

Many cells continued to be in need of redecoration and the majority of the heavily stained resin toilet pans in the cells remained a problem. The IMB understands that an extra strong descaler product has been found to show an improvement and a selection of staff are undergoing training in using the product.

The renovation of the cell windows with broken open/closing mechanisms resulting from design problems began with 70 windows being fixed on the Peace Spur and another 100 across the prison. A further 100 are due to be completed in early 2025. In very cold weather, non-closing windows caused the cells to become unacceptably cold. In the Segregation Unit, where prisoners spend very little time out of cell, this has had a considerable impact.

Despite isolated incidents noted above, there were no systemic issues with vermin infestation and a regular weekly maintenance service was in operation.

### **5.2 Segregation**

The segregation unit has 16 cells, plus two special accommodation cells (where items such as the furniture, bedding and sanitation have been removed for safety reasons). The statistics on segregation unit occupancy have been produced on a rolling basis in previous years, but this lapsed in 2024, and the monthly detail was produced retrospectively in the last few months of the year. This does undermine confidence in the prison's own statistics as entirely complete and reliable. With that caveat, the total number of prisoners segregated in the Segregation Unit in 2024 was 410, of whom 201 were young adults aged between 18 and 21. This compares with the 2023 total of 541, of whom 114 were under 21. The reasons for this reduction in overall numbers are complex and from the Board's observations as well as conversations with prison staff, include the reduced prison population resulting from

the early release schemes, the number of segregation unit cells out of action for some periods and a decision to stop automatically sending prisoners to the unit following incidents at height. The increase in the proportion of occupants who were young adults reflects in part the changing demographic within the prison.

A disproportionate number of black and Muslim prisoners were held in segregated conditions, compared with their total numbers in the prison population.

Of the 410 prisoners held in the segregation unit over the year, there were 135 under Good Order and Discipline (GOAD) rules, of whom 72 were under 21 (in 2023, the figures were 223 and 44 respectively).

It was difficult for the IMB to be present at many GOAD reviews (which determine whether or not a prisoner needs to remain in the segregation unit) for much of 2024, but new leadership of the segregation unit did act to rectify this, holding the reviews on the same afternoon each week. Whilst this has not worked perfectly, and IMB members still arrived to find the reviews have been completed or were delayed for a few hours, it was nonetheless a welcome step forward.

In 2023, we reported that the segregation management and review group (SMARG) meetings, which consider the segregation unit statistics and trends, including considering the age breakdown and minority ethnic split against the total HMP/YOI Isis population, had not met that year. It did meet in April 2024 to consider the statistics for part of 2023 but, unfortunately, did not meet again in 2024. There is clear intent to resume these quarterly meetings in 2025.

In 2024, 10 prisoners were held in the segregation unit for more than 42 days (requiring prison group director authorisation), most of whom were categorised as category B prisoners who needed to be transferred to an appropriate establishment. Whenever checked by the IMB, the required authorisations were in place.

Data on the use of restricted regimes in the unit was not available.

The number of prisoners on ACCTs held in the segregation unit was 40, a significant increase on 2023's 25. Last year we reported on a 47% increase from 2022, and the 2024 data suggest a trend is emerging, particularly given that the number of segregation occupants has decreased. Another increase to note is in the number of young adults (18- to 21-year-olds) in the segregation unit on an ACCT – 12 in 2024 compared to just two in 2023. This may reflect the shifting prisoner demographic and increase in young adults who spent time in the unit (almost twice as many as in 2023). The decision to hold prisoners with ACCTs in the segregation unit is always made by a Governor, recorded as a 'defensible decision', and is subject to review. ACCT documentation in the segregation unit was routinely found to be well completed and up to date.

IMB members attended occasional ACCT reviews, adjudications and sessions with the external adjudicator throughout the year. Such reviews were observed to be professionally run, with good attention paid to the needs and interests of the prisoners concerned.

During the year the special accommodation cell in the unit was used twice, and four dirty protests were recorded.

The Board remains concerned that prisoners with serious mental health problems were held in the segregation unit, often whilst waiting for an appropriate transfer to a specialist hospital. As there is no in-patient facility in the prison the segregation unit, though unsuitable, is the only option for prisoners who cannot stay on a spur.

A constant in the segregation unit is that the relationships between officers and prisoners were observed to be good and the unit was kept clean and generally maintained to a good standard. The segregation unit does get very cold in the winter, a particular problem since prisoners are confined to their cells.

### **5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers**

Over the year, 17 applications were made by prisoners to the IMB concerning the behaviour of staff. This compared to 13 in 2023 and 30 in 2022. We have observed that staff usually have good relationships with prisoners.

In a survey undertaken in November 2024, staff were asked whether they believe operational staff and prisoner relationships were positive in the prison: 91 responded and of these 8% said they were always positive, 52% mainly, 37% sometimes and 3% never.

Under the offender management in custody model, the expectation is that most prisoners will receive 45 minutes key work a week. This expectation hasn't been met at HMP/YOI Isis because, we have been told by the prison, there are insufficient staff. Data from P-Nomis (the prison national offender management information system, a database used within UK prisons to manage offender information and movements) shows that there were 633 key work sessions in 2024, just 2% of that expected. The prison has aimed to ensure that the limited keywork possible is targeted at the prisoners who most need it, such as those who are neurodiverse.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

There were some successes in terms of equality and diversity, and some areas of concern that the Board continues to monitor.

Members noted that the equalities manager was presented with a Butler Trust Award by Princess Anne 'for her game-changing impact as equalities lead at HMP/YOI Isis.'

Discussion forums took place involving: Gypsy, Romany and traveller prisoners; foreign nationals; black prisoners.

However, black prisoners were over-represented in staff assaults every month of 2024, and in prisoner assaults for ten months. They were also over-represented in possession of weapons for nine months of the year. Consequently, they were frequently over-represented in the number on basic and under-represented on enhanced incentives scheme levels. The IMB believes that more could be done to understand the reason why young black men are disproportionately involved in

violence and multiple prisoner fights and (possibly as a consequence) the disproportionately high number affected by PAVA spray as a basis for further planning.

Over the year, alongside the information regularly presented at equalities safety and use of force meetings, there was a more extended investigation into why black Muslim prisoners were consistently over-represented in incidences of violence, use of force and being placed on a basic regime. This involved equalities breakdowns of incidents, staff involved, incentive scheme outcomes, use of force, and two black Muslim forums, one on each houseblock. It was found that fighting was the main reason black Muslim men were over-represented in being on basic and having negative incentive scheme outcomes and that white British/Irish prisoners were more likely to have force used against them for non-compliance, in comparison to black Muslims who have force used against them due to over-representation in violence and gang affiliations. A number of recommendations were put in place and the December figures showed that these measures appear to have been successful, with both Muslim and Asian prisoners in range or under-represented in violent incidents and use of force.

The equalities manager left her post in mid-July to go to a new regional role. The head of Safer Custody oversaw the function pending the arrival of a new equalities manager in January 2025. Despite this hiatus, the prison continued to mount and expand its programme of events and initiatives to promote inclusion.

However, the head of Safer Custody reported to IMB members that lack of capacity had meant that it had not been possible fully to respond to discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) over the period, although he said they had been reviewed to make sure nothing was urgent. The Board was extremely concerned about this as it appears not to be in line with Section 5 of HMPPS guidance on using the discrimination incident reporting form.

From the responses of the head of Safer Custody to queries from the Board, we understood that there were no records of anyone other than the head of equalities undergoing training; that DIRFs over the period July-December had not been answered within 28 days; and that none of the prisoners submitting DIRFs in that period were informed that they would not be responded to until January or why. We were told that a new equalities manager would be in post from early January 2025. As part of their role, they would be required to expand the number of managers within the establishment who are provided with DIRF training. This would provide a pool of managers who could then respond to DIRFs to ensure time frames are met, or in the absence of the equalities manager.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The population on 18 December 2024 (602 on roll) was: 43% Muslim; 12% Roman Catholic; 30% Anglican and other Christian denominations; 12% no religion; and 3% all others (which includes Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Jehovah's Witness and Rastafarian).

It was another challenging year in multi-faith chaplaincy, impacted again by the demands on prison officers' availability, separate regimes, increased violence and gang affiliation, all of which contributed to prisoners not being able to attend regular weekly faith services.

During 2022/3 Friday prayers were curtailed for Muslim prisoners, following a serious violent incident, resulting in prisoners being restricted to attending by spur once every six weeks. This has significantly improved during 2024, allowing prisoners to attend prayers, by houseblock every other week; however, the aim remains to offer all Muslim prisoners the option to attend Friday prayers every week.

Prison officers' availability continued to have an adverse impact on Christian Sunday services, which were often cancelled on the day. This affected the Anglican and other Christian denominations, with the exception of the Roman Catholic population. This was raised as a concern by the Board last year and remains a concern as staff availability can be unpredictable.

On a positive note, there was a joint Christian service held on Christmas day for all Christians, including the Roman Catholic population; which received very positive feedback.

The Free Church pastor, who provided pastoral support to all Christian prisoners, with the exception of Roman Catholics, continued to distribute in-cell packs to the Christian population and any other offenders who express an interest. The packs contained daily scripture suggestions, actions to take, prayers to make and a daily prayer journal. These packs were very well received and were a regular part of the prison's Christian population's faith journey.

In addition, the Free Church Pastor distributed a weekly Ras Teferi in-cell pack to the Rastafarian prison population (six, as of December 2024). The pack contained greetings in the name of H.I.M Emperor Haile Selassie, daily prayers, chants and psalms, together with suggested readings.

There were two successful Sycamore Tree programmes, a six-week restorative justice course, run last year. These remain popular and it was planned to continue them in 2025. However, late in the production of this report we were informed that Sycamore Tree will not continue in 2025, as it had been decided on a national basis that this course should cease.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

The incentives scheme (made up of enhanced, standard and basic) was reviewed by the prison in the closing months of 2023, and a new scheme, called the Incentives and Personal Improvement (Rehabilitative Culture) (IPI) scheme came into force on 12 February. The revised scheme aimed to allow for the neurodevelopmental stage of young prisoners, taking into account that the adolescent brain responds better to reward rather than punishment.

The main changes from the incentives scheme were:

- Introduction of a new incentive level, enhanced two, in addition to the three original incentives scheme levels. This allowed prisoners who displayed consistently good behaviour, were in full-time employment or education and

had signed a compact to agree to be part of the voluntary drug testing scheme to receive additional benefits.

- A staged approach to the use of the basic level. At the basic level, in-cell phone use is reduced to 30 minutes a day; prisoners' cell doors are locked whilst out on association; only 30 minutes a day allowed for domestics (showers, using the biometric machines); and no access is permitted to the gymnasium, as well as the incentives scheme sanctions of losing their TV and ability to spend money. The time that a misbehaving prisoner would spend at the basic level would be reduced from 28 days to 21 days with a review every 7 days but can be extended beyond 21 days, if behaviour remains poor.
- Staff would be issued with duplicate copy booklets to issue warnings for positive and negative behaviours. An instant reward scheme would allow well-behaving prisoners to be given rewards for positive behaviours, according to the number of positive behaviour slips they collected:
  - three slips: an item of their choice from the instant rewards box. This contains items such as sweets, chocolate, protein drink, water bottle, mug, food containers, earphones, HDMI cable, AUX lead, shower gel, cocoa butter, lip balm and gym gloves;
  - three slips: a double video visit per month;
  - four slips: a family photo on visits;
  - six slips: an occupational therapy session.
  - eight slips: a meal at the prison's 180 Kitchen (the staff catering facility);
- The process also included publicising the expectations of prisoner behaviour and guidance to officers on interacting with neurodiverse prisoners and the importance of celebrating prisoners' successes.

The main concern expressed by prisoners about the scheme, noted by IMB members (on monitoring visits and at the Prisoner Council), was the loss of in-cell phone time when they were at the basic level.

Data on the operation of the incentives system were only available for nine months of the year – there were no data for September, October and November. In the months where data are available, an average of 86 prisoners (15%) were on the basic level and 190 (32%) were at enhanced. This compares to 11% and 40% in 2023, reflecting the increase in violence. The prison said that the ratio of negative to positive behaviour slips issued was about 60:40, though they aimed for it to be 50:50.

In general, the proportion of prisoners from minority ethnicities at each incentives scheme level matches the proportion in the prison population, although black prisoners were over-represented on the basic status for seven of the nine months where data were available. The proportions on basic from different religions were broadly the same as in the prison population. The most striking difference between the number of prisoners at each level, compared with the population, was with respect to prisoner age: 58% of those on basic and 20% of those on enhanced were aged 18-21, compared with about 40% in the population being in the 18-21 age category. This reflected the increased propensity to violence and bad behaviour of the younger demographic.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The number of prisoner complaints was higher in 2024 than 2023, with an average of 104 per month, compared to 62 per month the previous year. The prison changed their criteria for rejecting complaints in May, after the Board expressed concern about rejected complaints in our weekly monitoring report. The average number of complaints recorded per month was 78 for January to April, and 117 per month thereafter. The main changes to the criteria were to accept the following complaints, that were previously rejected:

- Not signed or dated;
- Written on incorrect forms (e.g. comp 1A forms can be used to submit comp1 issues);
- Submitted over three months after the incident took place;
- Appeal forms over one week after receiving their original response;
- Regarding incentive scheme decisions;
- Regarding property in another prison and have not been in HMP/YOI Isis for 28 days;
- Requests (unless a member of the Business Hub can answer their request there and then, this will be logged on the rejection form).

As in previous years, complaints about property – about 28% – were, by far, the most common. About 10% of complaints were passed on to other prisons for response, with HMP Wandsworth and HMP Wormwood Scrubs the most frequent. The next most common categories were canteen (9%), transfers (7%) and staff (7%). Complaint forms were consistently available alongside the complaints' boxes on each spur. An average of 62.4% of complaints were responded to on time, an increase from last year's 57%.

## **5.8 Property**

As the Board said in last year's report, and in every annual report since 2018, prisoner property continues to be a problem, particularly property on transfer between prisons. The aim of the prisoners' property policy framework to improve the management of prisoner property has not been met. Prisoner complaints about property were, at 28% of all complaints, by far the most common, and 22% (45) of IMB applications concerned property, with over half of them (12%) relating to property during transfer or in another facility.

## 6. Health and wellbeing

### 6.1 Healthcare general

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust was the provider for physical and mental healthcare services and substance-misuse treatment services. Except for September, health partnerships met bi-monthly at a local delivery board to review the healthcare services provided and the management of operational challenges. Complaints to the Trust were in single figures each month, with a high of nine in June and a single complaint in July and October. All complainants were seen and their complaint discussed. Although there were no common themes, the most frequent complaints concerned medication. In 2024, there were 11 healthcare-related applications to the IMB.

There were 52.4 whole time equivalent (WTE) staff providing services, including a mental health team of 12.9 WTE, primary care team of 17.5 WTE, and four pharmacy staff. This excludes psychiatrists, consultants and GPs. Dental services were directly contracted by NHS England, and the Trust sub-contracts for: optician, ultrasound, sexual health, podiatrist, physiotherapy and NACRO (a charity offering prisoners practical help and support through its education, housing and health services through the gate services). The vacancy rate since April averaged around 5%. Throughout the year a full time Occupational Therapist and a new Speech and Language Therapist post (0.4wte) have remained vacant, the latter possibly because it is shared with HMP Wandsworth and travel between the two prisons is not an attractive proposition.

The early days in custody (EDiC) team is a multi-disciplinary team that conducts first-night assessments and secondary health screenings. Between 98% and 100% of first night and secondary assessments were completed. In 2024, new arrivals were also offered hearing checks; these have been included in the secondary screening, and failures were referred to a GP or advanced nurse practitioner.

The release and transfer team ensures that a released prisoner is re-connected with a GP, is aware of and able to keep hospital appointments and is in touch with support agencies such as NACRO. The team operated alongside prison staff who are working with prisoners in the 12 weeks before their release.

Normal healthcare staffing encompassed a core day between 8am and 7pm. Outside of these hours, there was a nurse in the prison and the GP on call. In the segregation unit, a nurse saw each prisoner every day and a GP saw all prisoners every 72 hours. A member of the mental health team carried out weekly welfare checks.

There was an average of 934 dispenses of medication each month. Prisoners received medication at the treatment room on each house block, unless they were assessed as suitable to have prescribed medication in their cells. In 2024, in possession risk assessments (to evaluate whether prisoners could be trusted to be



in possession of their own medication) were completed for between 97% and 100% of newly arrived prisoners and 99% of existing prisoners. In October, a new policy for checking that prisoners in possession of medication were compliant with the conditions that applied to their medication was introduced. 13 patients were seen and three were found to be non-compliant.

Throughout the year, prisoner experience surveys have been conducted. An average of 86 responses were received each month; of these, 74 were positive. Negative responses related to medication and wait times. Towards the end of the year, patient forums were restarted.

## **6.2 Physical healthcare**

Primary care was provided through a range of GP, nurse and specialist clinics, such as dental, podiatry, sexual health, optician, long-term conditions and blood-borne viruses.

The number of prisoners not attending for their appointments ('did not attend' or DNAs) was high throughout the year, but not as high as in 2023 and the percentage of DNAs was reducing in most clinics. This reflected a number of steps put in place to encourage attendance. These included the GP, advanced nurse practitioner and nurse clinics moving to the house blocks (something that isn't possible for dental, optician and some sexual health appointments). The in-cell phone is used to remind prisoners of their appointments and confirm their intention to attend. 'Red band' prisoners (those with a greater degree of trust and autonomy in their jobs in the prison) have been used to check on prisoners due at clinics. Four red band posts had been approved, but appointments to these posts have been difficult and turnover high, because of releases and transfers. The reasons prisoners gave for not attending included attendance at the gym or education, or association. In May, it was confirmed to prisoners that attending a healthcare appointment would not result in loss of pay and that refusal to attend an appointment without good reason would lead to a negative incentive scheme outcome. Insufficient staffing levels and operational issues have meant that on occasion, prisoners were not able to attend appointments.

Waiting times for all healthcare provision were acceptable, except for physiotherapy, where waits were protracted, due to a change in the contract and a reduced number of clinics.

## **6.3 Mental health**

The mental health team consisted of psychological interventions, mental health in-reach, psychiatry, counselling (provided by Atrium) but the occupational therapy post had been vacant for the year. Patients with known mental health needs were identified on arrival. It was assessed that 45% of prisoners had a mental health problem. Waiting times for mental health in-reach, psychiatry, counselling and psychological interventions were good, but it could take up to eight weeks for an initial triage for those requesting mental health input. The prison has no facilities for prisoners who need in-patient care and the segregation unit, though unsuitable, is the only option for such prisoners who cannot stay in their normal location. Where it

is assessed that a prisoner needs to transfer to an in-patient facility, the wait in the segregation unit is too long and on occasion, longer than the maximum 28 days.

There was a weekly multi-disciplinary team referral meeting and trauma-informed consultation within the wider prison for complex cases, segregated prisoners and prisoners on ACCTs or CSIPs. ACCT reviews were attended by a member of the mental health team.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and learning disability pathways are in place, as were the 'stepped care' model of psychological interventions, counselling and accessible psychiatry.

The release and transfer team developed release plans for mental health patients and contacted community mental health services for those with continuing care needs.

A neurodiversity support manager has been employed by the prison. It is her assessment that around 50% of prisoners had some type of neurodiversity. Her role is to provide targeted support to such prisoners, provide training for staff and support the release of prisoners with neurodiversity needs. Her work is based on meeting the expressed needs of prisoners and not on any medical diagnosis; because of the need to maintain patient confidentiality, there is no sharing of prisoner/patient information.

#### **6.4 Social care**

Partnership working between Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust and the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) continued in 2024. In April, RBG as the commissioner of social care in the prison, changed its provider to Eleanor Services. This organisation is responsible for delivering all social care defined in the support plans provided by the RBG. Due to the young age of the population, the demand for social care was very low. At the end of 2024, there were no prisoners requiring support.

#### **6.5 Time out of cell, regime**

The small amount of time prisoners have out of their cells remains a concern, impacted mainly by prison staff availability, separate regimes, violence and netting incidents.

It remains difficult to assess accurately how much time prisoners are actually out of their cells, as the prison does not have any meaningful data. The minimum appears to be around 30-60 minutes a day for those in the segregation unit or on separate regimes, increasing to around five to eight hours for those on the Peace spur, and having jobs.

The regime in place during 2024 has provided a minimum of two and a half hours out of cell for all prisoners not in segregation or on a separate regime. During this time, prisoners can take showers, complete orders or requests on the biometric system and take exercise in the exercise yards. Prisoners, in theory, also have the opportunity to attend gym sessions two or three times a week. Many prisoners also attend education or the skills zone, medical appointments or specific programmes

relating to a prisoner's sentence plan. A typical prisoner might attend four education sessions a week, amounting to a further two and half hours out of their cells for each session. There are no out of cell activities in the evening. At the end of the year, the regime ended at 4.30 pm.

Time out of cell on Fridays and at weekends is considerably reduced – two and a half hours each day, unless there are staffing shortages, when this may be reduced to one and a half hours. Prisoners have shared with the IMB their frustration at the small amount of time that they are out of their cells at the weekends and in the evenings. The HMIP recommendation that prisoners should have a minimum of 10 hours out of cell has not been achieved.

The Board were particularly concerned about prisoners who were on separate regimes. These prisoners were kept separate from the rest of the prison population, usually because of the risk of violence from other prisoners with whom they had conflict, sometimes at their own request. There were as many as 20 prisoners on separate regimes each day – for example, the average number in June was 18. These prisoners were only allowed out of their cells when other prisoners were locked up, and so may be out of their cells for as little as 30 minutes a day.

Since 18 November, prisoners on the peace spur have benefited from a increased time out of their cells, additional gym sessions, prison visits and activities; further benefits and freedoms are planned for 2025.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

On 1 July, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust sub-contracted drug rehabilitation interventions to Change Grow Live, a voluntary sector organisation. Referrals to the service are made from a number of sources, but the majority are from probation, induction or self-referral. The interventions case load from July was an average of 45 each month, with an average of 40 referrals per month. A range of groups were planned to help prisoners with specific addictions, including alcohol, cannabis and substance awareness. The waiting list for these groups is substantially higher than the numbers planned to attend or that actually attended. For example, in September the waiting list was 70, 10 sessions were planned but three were cancelled, 35 prisoners from an expected 50 actually attended a session. In October, 84 prisoners were on the waiting list, five sessions were planned but one was cancelled and from an expected 26 participants, 16 attended.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

Soft skills training for prisoners was part of a number of initiatives and training in 2024. For example:

- Samaritans trained prisoners who had applied to be a Listener in listening skills and how to emotionally support other prisoners;
- The neurodiversity support manager trained neurodiverse prisoners in a range of soft skills through her 'wild skills' bushcraft and survival sessions;
- Belong, a restorative justice organisation, trained prisoners to be conflict coaches and help with mediation between conflicting prisoners;
- Untold (a charitable organisation) held various creative skills classes, such as art therapy, which also aimed to improve soft skills.

## 7. Progression and resettlement

### 7.1 Education, vocational training

During 2024 education and vocational training were provided by prison education supplier Novus, who teach courses in English and maths, as well as vocational training in employability, barbering, food production, food safety, catering, learning and development, radio, painting and decorating, railtrack (a railway engineering and track safety course), business and construction skills certification scheme (CSCS). In addition, the prison provided training in industrial cleaning, waste and recycling, grounds management and horticulture.

Third party/voluntary sector courses included music production, football coaching, theatre and media production. There was no data available on the levels of employment in these areas for prisoners on release. The charity Untold continued their creative training in courses such as theatre skills, dance, music production and art. The induction course for events management company Gallowglass continued to be run for men close to release. This offered employment opportunities, with interviews held at the end of the course.

Educational attainment has improved in 2024. This is partly because the regime has allowed prisoners to attend more education and training sessions, but also due to higher staffing and improved teaching quality. During 2024, 817 prisoners successfully completed courses out of 954 enrolments – an 86% success rate. The 2024 success rates by subject improved on 2023: English was 88% (2023: 70%); maths 78% (2023: 73%) and vocational courses 86% (2023: 85%).

Skills zone success rates varied between 60 and 85%, averaging 70%.

In 2024, 55 prisoners completed a waste management course, with 38 gaining a qualification. 185 prisoners were enrolled on various industrial cleaning programmes; of these, 64 prisoners were on programmes that offered a qualification, 55 completed the programme and 41 gained a qualification. Other programmes included enhanced cleaning skills, such as buffering and manual handling programmes. Grounds maintenance programmes have been affected by the absence of the instructor. Grounds maintenance also acts as a stepping stone for some prisoners to re-engage with other activities.

Barbering training was provided in small salons on the houseblocks, allowing attendees to achieve the level three barbering qualification.

The staff catering facility, the 180 Kitchen, provided opportunities for prisoners to secure a level two qualification in food preparation and handling. The 180 Kitchen also supplied portion-controlled meals for the community through various outlets. Men spoke positively about this facility and valued the training it offers.

Most prisoners taking education and training courses attended for four sessions a week, totalling 10 hours. About 10% of students only attended two learning sessions a week because of concerns about potential conflict with other prisoners. These prisoners did additional in-cell education work.

Attendance figures for the Academy/Skill Zone for 2024 are shown in Annex B (see graph 11). Attendance increased in the second half of the year, possibly as a result of regime changes. On their monitoring visits, IMB members were often concerned about the number of prisoners who did not attend their assigned courses. Prison figures from the last three months of the year showed that the attendance rate averaged 74%, with about 5% refusing to attend. The education department worked closely with prison staff to encourage attendance.

Education staff and prison staff also worked closely together in the planning for the SDS40 early release scheme. Education staff were informed of which prisoners were to be released early six to eight weeks before release and then ensured that they all completed their current assigned courses before release.

The quality of teaching was assessed using 'learning walks' by Novus senior staff, with participation from prison managers, with teachers being assessed as 'good' or 'outstanding' for their delivery of the curriculum. Teaching quality was assessed as good, with scores of 86-90% against a target of 80%.

In June HMPPS issued a Notice to Improve to the education provider across all London prisons, including HMP/YOI Isis. This was not aimed at the prison but contracted provision delivered by Novus. Some observations were seen by Novus as not applicable to the prison, for example, quality of teaching and data management. A follow up review of HMP/YOI Isis in October was positive.

## **7.2 Library**

The number of library visits by prisoners increased in 2024 compared to the previous year, with an average of 791 visits per month compared to 569 in 2023, in line with the increased number of education sessions that prisoners could attend. Librarians also visit the spurs to deliver books and to collect books from the return boxes. The number of library sessions lost due to incidents, events or, most often, lack of staff, increased from the previous year, with 44 sessions being lost between April and December.

The library hosted regular events during the year, for example:

- Author visits from Andy West (twice), D. D. Armstrong, Wendy Joseph and Simon Callow (reading from A Christmas Carol).
- Quizzes marking various commemorative days, such as a finger spelling quiz for Deaf Awareness Week and a sweepstake-like competition for the Euros in the summer of 2024.
- A chess club and a book club, in which prisoners read and discussed books, including Peckham Boy and Concrete Rose.

Storybook Dads (where prisoners can record stories on CD or DVD for their children) continued through 2024, run through the library, with the charity, PACT, making the recordings.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

The offender management unit (OMU) faced similar issues to previous years, with shortages of staff, exacerbated by cross-deployment of prison offender managers (POMs) to cover staff shortages elsewhere in the prison. At the end of 2024, the number of probation officers was less than half of the target level.

The backlog of offender assessment system reports, used to assess the risks and needs of prisoners (OASys) significantly improved during 2024 (from a backlog of 116 at the end of 2023). At one point, the backlog reduced to 16 although it has since increased. However, the caseload per POM remained high. The backlog of OASys reports is in part due to prisoners arriving at HMP/YOI Isis without one where this was the responsibility of the sending prison.

OMU surgeries were generally held once a month on each of the spurs. However, lack of access to OMU staff remained a topic for applications to the IMB. OMU surgeries were also suspended for a period of around one month, due to OMU staff focusing on the recalculation of release dates for the SDS40 early release scheme.

The number of applications to the IMB relating to sentence management increased relative to 2023, in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of the total (57 applications, compared to 31 in 2023, representing 28% of the total applications received, compared to 18% in 2023). Noticeable increases in applications on this topic were observed in January, May and August. In August, some applications involved questions regarding eligibility for the SDS40 early release scheme, which came into effect in September. Other specific concerns throughout the year included not having received sentence plans, awaiting information on home detention curfew (HDC, often referred to as 'tagging') eligibility or re-categorisation.

Changes to eligibility for early release or HDC in 2024 further increased pressures on OMU due to the demands of recalculation, acceleration in release dates and the high churn of prisoners. Some prisoners not eligible for release under these schemes express concerns about the level of OMU contact or engagement, as resources were heavily focused on those due for release.

### **7.4 Family contact**

Over the year, there were 3,916 social visits, with a total of 7,478 visitors attending. There were also 2,734 social video calls and 54 prisoners attended family day visits (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement, usually in more informal settings), with 204 visitors attending.

There are organisations working with HMP/YOI Isis whose aim is to foster family relationships. Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) is the principal organisation providing support services to foster positive family relationships, including with children. They offer group and individual casework for prisoners through the Routes to Change programme and ongoing support for up to 6 months after release, working with the Probation Service. They also support family members through befriending and peer support and run family visits at the prison.

## 7.5 Resettlement planning

There were 727 releases in 2024, compared to 659 in 2023. Throughout 2024, there were national changes to early release schemes and to eligibility for HDC. The SDS40 scheme in particular led to a large number of releases on two defined days in September and October (tranche one on 10 September and tranche two on 22 October).

Prison officers and probation officers in the prison manage the release of prisoners, with local probation officers dealing with higher risk offenders. OMU consider that a large proportion (and often a majority) of prisoners are classified as high-risk at any one time, although the exact proportion will fluctuate with transfers and releases. The continued issue with lack of probation staff in the prison and in the community made preparing prisoners for release less effective than it could have been.

The changes in early release schemes (ECSL70 and SDS40) and HDC changes led to increased pressure on HMP/YOI Isis and the OMU, and probation staff in particular. The recalculation of release dates for SDS40 created significant workload for OMU staff in July and August. Efforts were made across HMP/YOI Isis to accelerate resettlement planning for affected prisoners, for example, coordination with education to ensure that relevant prisoners could take exams before their release date. In relation to HDC changes, there were practical problems such as the availability of sufficient approved accommodation. Overall, these changes exacerbated the existing resourcing issues for OMU and some prisoners expressed concerns that they were not receiving the expected contact or being informed as early as they expected about changes to their eligibility for release.

From the Board's observations, HMP/YOI Isis appeared to cope well with the SDS40 release scheme. 37 prisoners were released in tranche one in September and 12 prisoners were released in tranche two in October. In the lead-up to the release dates, a focused effort took place to ensure that prisoners due to leave were prepared. This included, for example, efforts to ensure first-night accommodation for those released. Taking into account all releases during September and October (not limited to SDS40), available data indicated that the proportion housed on the first night of custodial release was 98.95% in September and 97.06% in October (both in excess of the 90% target). Healthcare told the IMB that all those released on 10 September had been registered with a GP or would be under the GP arrangements for approved premises where applicable and were given prescriptions for medication.

IMB members were present to observe the first release on 10 September. Prisoners were processed and released in groups of three, with those most at risk being released earlier in the day. Of those who spoke to the IMB, each confirmed they had accommodation (of which some was approved premises). Catch 22, a commissioned rehabilitative services provider, was present at the gate to provide support on release to those referred by POMs, as well as practical help such as use of a mobile phone and snacks.

Programmes to support resettlement and reduce reoffending included the HMPPS accredited Thinking Skills programme, a range of interventions by the healthcare

team, and DWP support to access relevant services on release. The prison employment hub continued to support prisoners into work and training. Alongside these, 14 voluntary sector organisations provided resettlement services. They included help to obtain secure accommodation and employment or training; programmes to build and maintain positive relationships, especially with families; and programmes addressing lifestyle choices and attitudes and health and emotional wellbeing associated with offending behaviour. Services included tailored individual support and group programmes pre-release, and some continued after release.

A directory of services with guidance on referral routes was available for prisoners and staff. The voluntary sector organisations worked to improve awareness of services among prisoners by recruiting reps on each wing, and identified the need to provide regular inputs to improve prison officers' awareness and knowledge and increase referrals. They also reported that staff shortages impacted some delivery, including being able to see prisoners out of their cell.

Resettlement services collected data on the use of the services; however, this is not aggregated in an overall report. Also, as noted in the past, there is no system for tracking outcomes for prisoners released.



## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	400

### Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	18	8
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	12	16
C	Equality	4	1
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	9	1
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	4	7
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	4	7
F	Food and kitchens	1	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	11	11
H1	Property within the establishment	14	20
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	34	25
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	1	1
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	31	57
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	13	17
K	Transfers	8	23
L	Miscellaneous	6	10
	Total number of applications	170	205

## Annex A

### Service providers

- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare, while Oxleas Interventions provides support to those with substance misuse issues.
- Novus is the education provider.
- Library services are provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
- Mitie provides comprehensive facilities management, including catering.
- Charitable, voluntary or business organisations working within the prison included:
  - The Shannon Trust
  - Switchback
  - Kinetic
  - Belong
  - Men of Purpose
  - Bounce Back
  - Atrium
  - St Mungo's
  - Samaritans
  - Trailblazers
  - Forward Trust
  - Untold
  - Guildhall
  - The Brit School
  - The Young Vic
  - Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)
  - Changing the Game
  - Storybook Dads
  - Gallowglass
  - Goldsmiths College
  - Shaw Trust
  - Eleanor Services
  - CGL

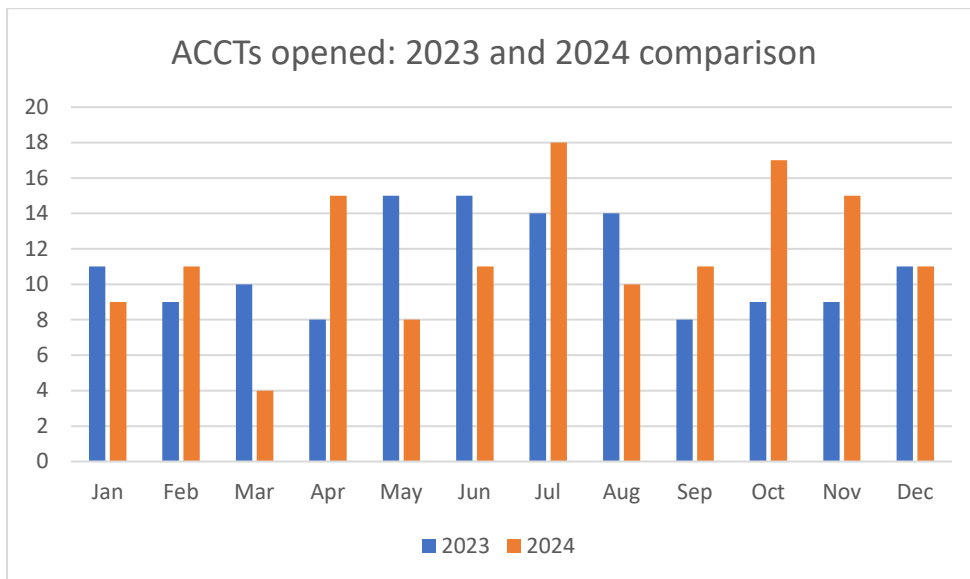
## Annex B

### Tables and graphs

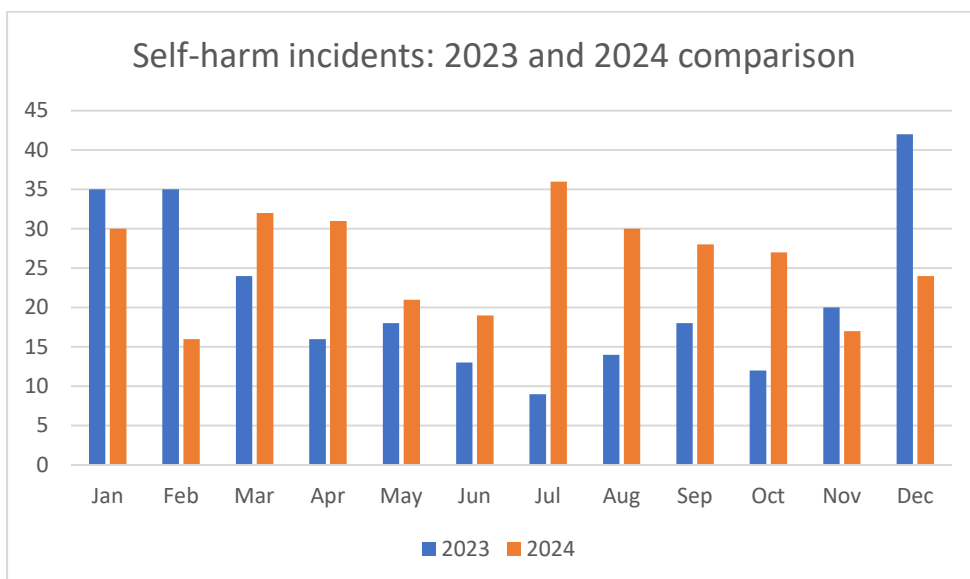
Table one. Reception activity data of prisoners for 2024

Total released	Transfer in	Transfer out	Hospital escort	Funeral escort	Transfer to court
727	1038	230	325	2	100

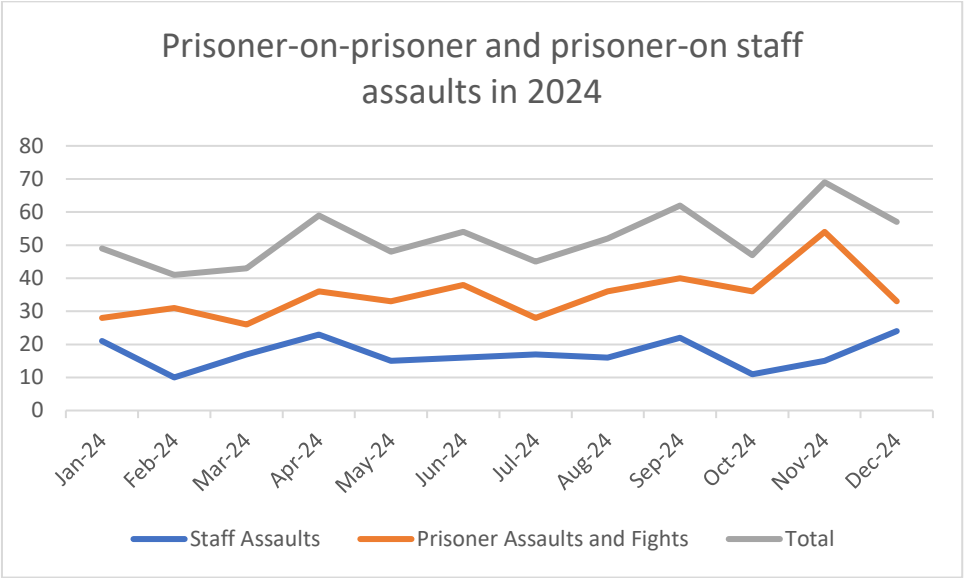
Graph one



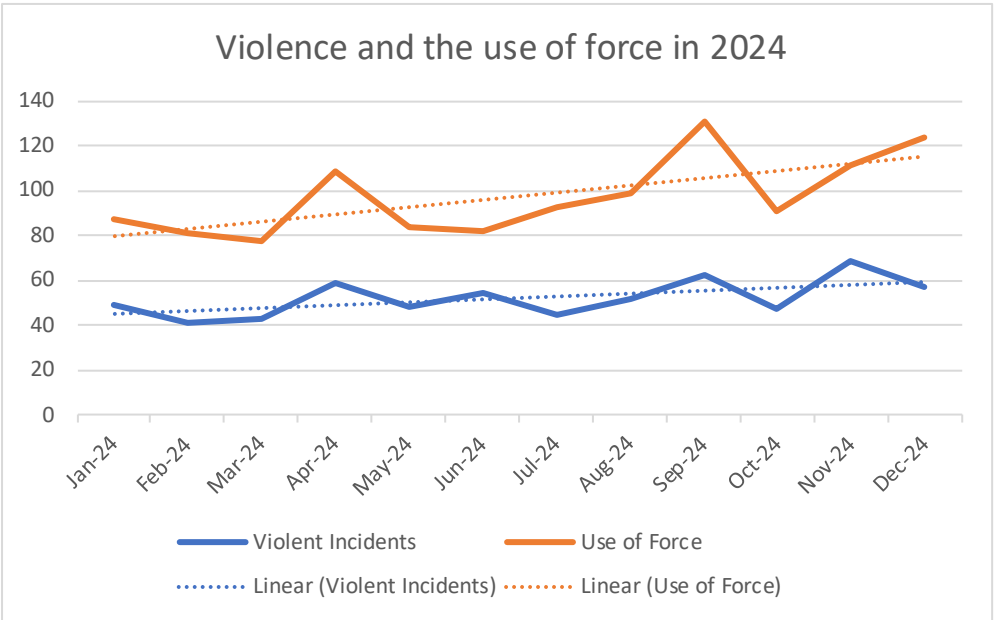
Graph two



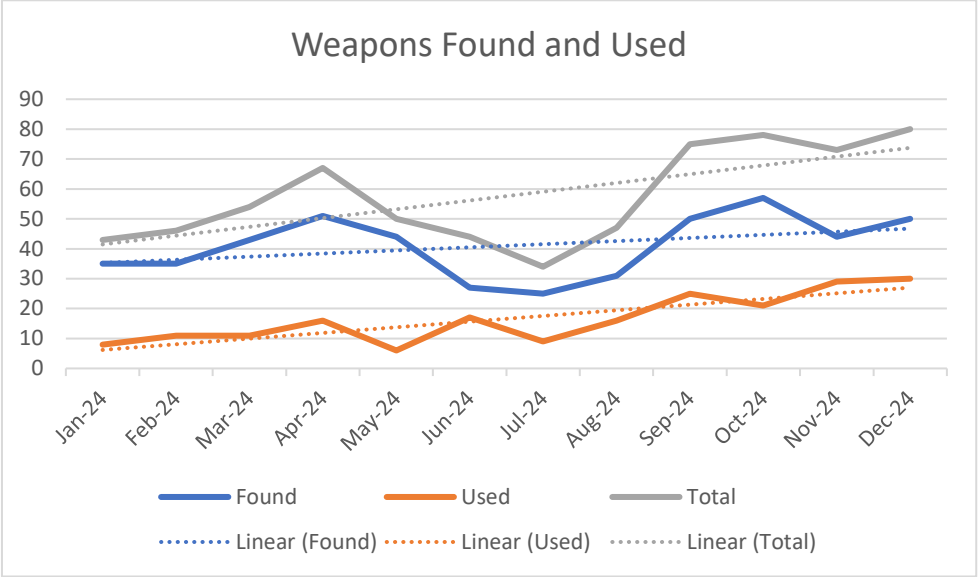
Graph three



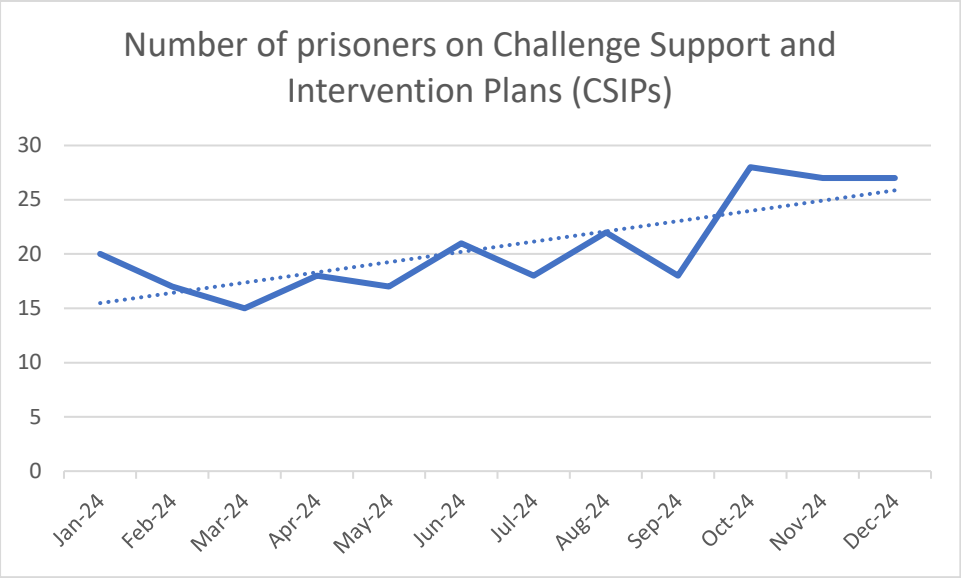
Graph four



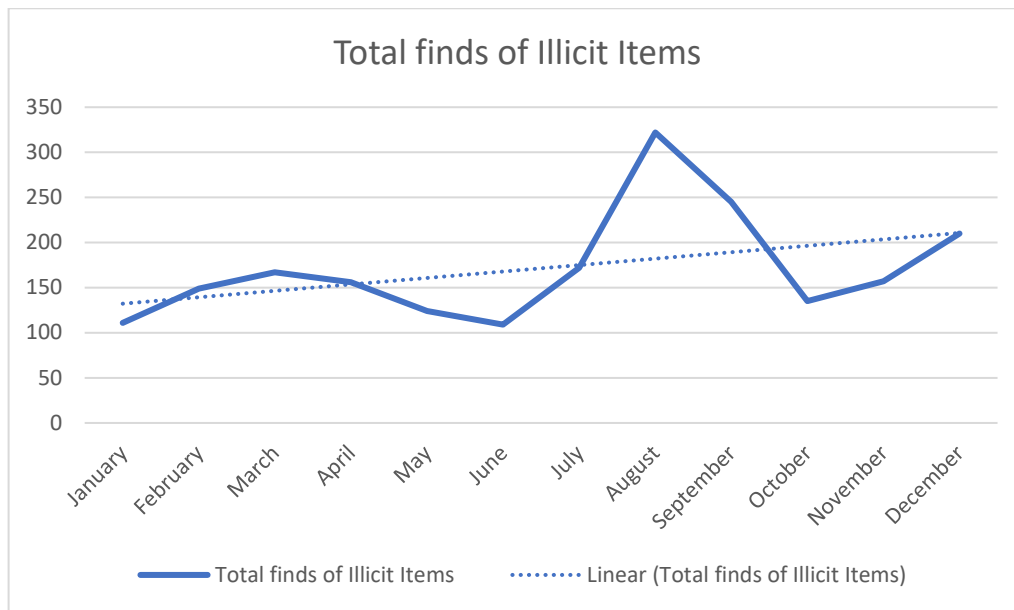
Graph five



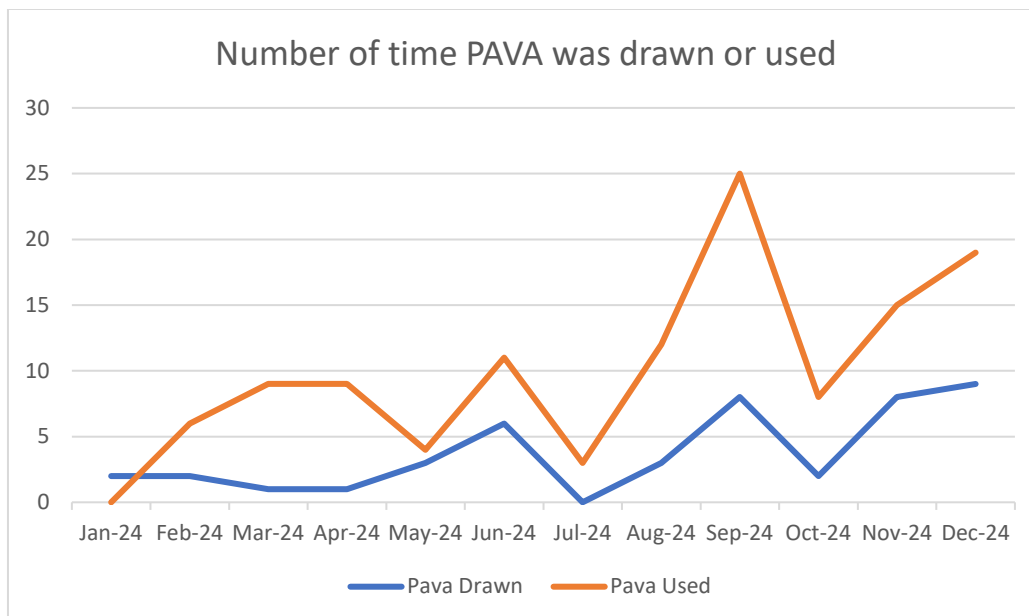
Graph six



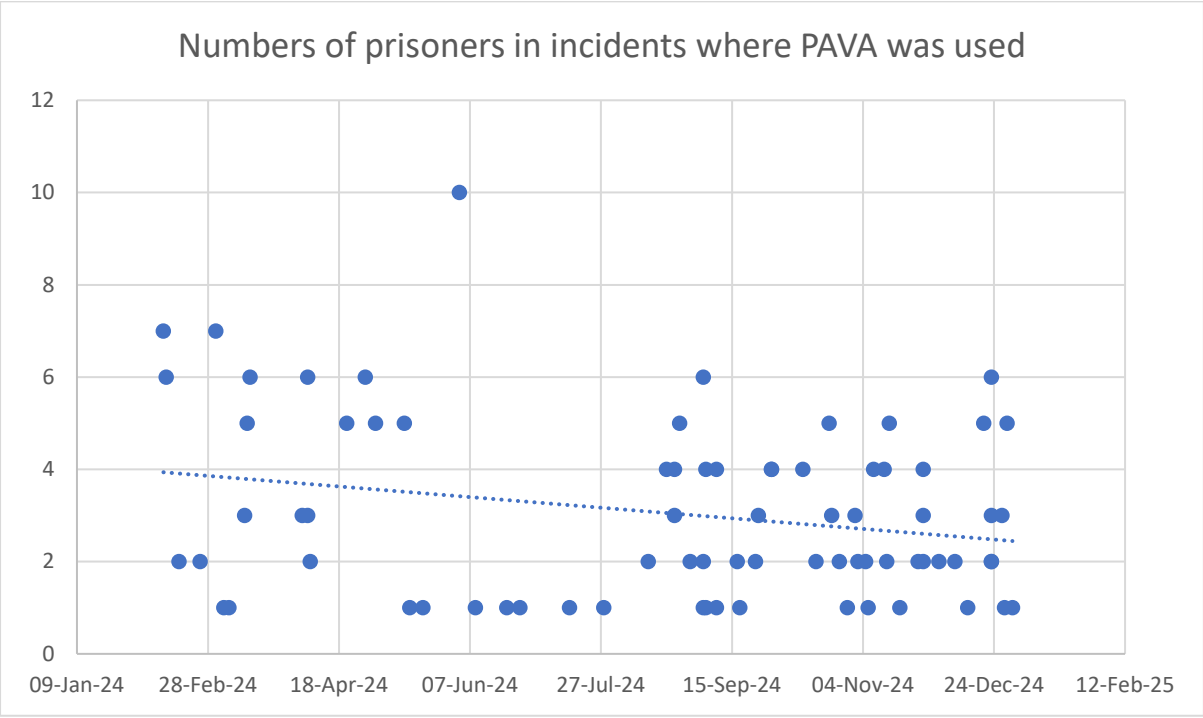
Graph seven:



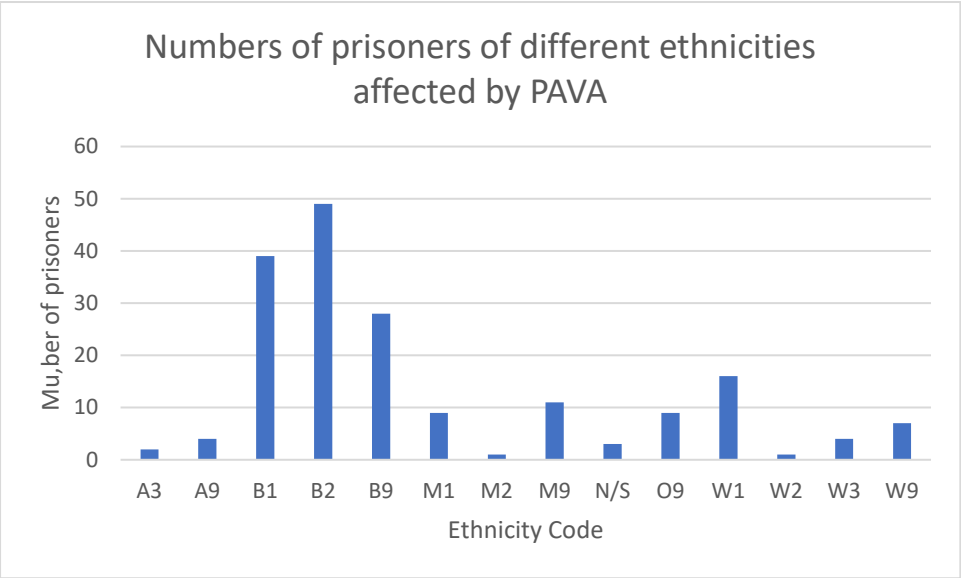
Graph eight



Graph nine



Graph ten



Code	Ethnicity
Asian or Asian British	
A1	Indian
A2	Pakistani
A3	Bangladeshi
A9	Any other Asian background
Black or Black British	
B1	Caribbean
B2	African
B9	Any other Black background
Mixed	
M1	White and Black Caribbean
M2	White and Black African
M3	White and Asian
M9	Any other mixed background
Chinese or any other ethnic group	
O1	Chinese
O9	Any other ethnic group
White	
W1	British
W2	Irish
W9	Any other White background

Graph 11

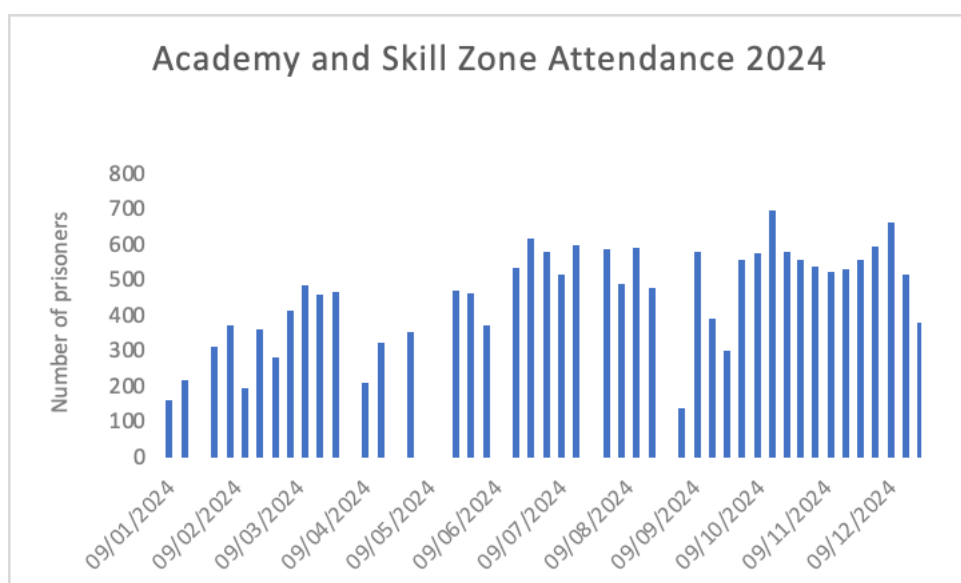




Table two: education achievement in 2024

Course	Enrolments	Achieved
Pre-Entry	12	8
English Entry 1	10	10
English Entry 2	20	20
English Entry 3	56	51
English L1	89	74
English L2	77	67
Maths Entry 2	6	3
Maths Entry 3	63	55
Maths L1	31	22
Maths L2	33	24
Employability	59	49
Barbering	50	39
Food Production	13	10
Food safety	53	52
Catering	8	5
Learning & Development	56	39
Radio	48	39
Painting & decorating (unitised, multiple enrolments)	144	128
Rail Track (Unitised)	107	107
Business	5	1
CSCS	14	14
Total	954	817

## Annex C

### Results of emergency cell bell data analysis

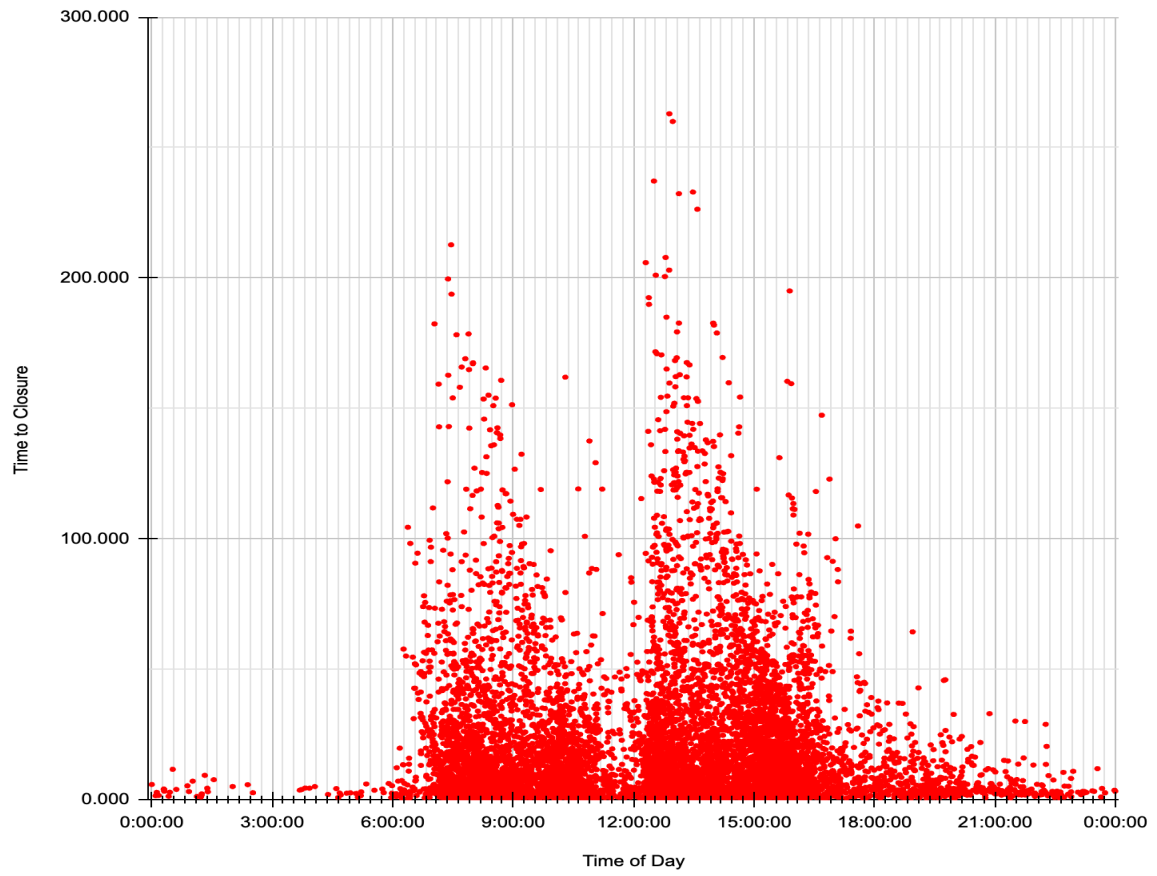
#### Results of data recorded 1- 23 August 2024

In the 22 days recorded, there were 9,110 ECB calls. These figures are calculated by filtering out any cell bells which were closed in 30 seconds or less. Here is a breakdown by spur:

Spur	Average Time to Closure (mins)	Longest Cell Bell Duration (mins)	Number of Cell Bell Calls	Cell Bells Per Day	Cell Bells Per Hour
A	22.150	193.833	1275	58.0	2.4
B	26.835	262.967	1097	49.9	2.1
C	24.583	201.083	1352	61.5	2.6
D	22.351	237.183	1431	65.0	2.7
E	19.638	200.567	1007	45.8	1.9
F	14.976	154.083	1113	50.6	2.1
G	11.180	141.217	919	41.8	1.7
H	12.794	189.917	859	39.0	1.6
R	8.218	69.750	57	2.6	0.1

The top quartile (25% of calls) originated from 7% of cells (33 cells), the bottom quartile from 58% of cells (270 cells). So a disproportionate number of calls originate from a small number of cells. There appears to be a correlation of the time to close cell bells with peaks at about 9am and 1pm – see graph below where each point represents the time to closure of one ECB call.

Time to Closure vs Time of Day



### **Results of data recorded in November 2024 (13 days, unspecified)**

In the 13 days recorded, there were 5,521 ECB calls. These figures are calculated by filtering out any cell bells that were closed in 30 seconds or less. Here is a breakdown by spur:

<b>Spur</b>	<b>Average Time to Closure (mins)</b>	<b>Longest Cell Bell Duration (mins)</b>	<b>Number of Cell Bell Calls</b>	<b>Cell Bells Per Day</b>	<b>Cell Bells Per Hour</b>
A	20.982	211.050	929	71.5	3.0
B	24.996	225.517	684	52.6	2.2
C	17.910	199.300	835	64.2	2.7
D	8.924	80.233	448	34.5	1.4
E	20.641	174.583	586	45.1	1.9
F	10.806	90.067	694	53.4	2.2
G	11.811	147.533	561	43.2	1.8
H	4.919	69.550	767	59.0	2.5
R	15.103	46.017	17	1.3	0.1

IMB observations from the data:

- Average 2.4 calls / hour / spur (November data) vs 2.5 calls / hour / spur (August data)
- Slightly better average time to closure in November than August
- Quartile data:
  - August: The 7% most active cells cause the same number of calls as the least active 58% cells.
  - November: The 8% most active cells cause the same number of calls as the least active 53% cells.
- Similar hourly distribution in November as August, with peaks in time to answer at c. 8.45am and 1pm.



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