



Independent  
Monitoring  
Boards

# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Doncaster**

**For reporting year  
1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025**

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. Description of the establishment

HMP Doncaster, in South Yorkshire, opened in June 1994 and is a local reception and resettlement prison serving the courts, with an additional function of resettlement for prisoners released into the local community. A category B prison (a high-security facility for prisoners who don't need maximum security but for whom escape must still be very difficult) for men, it is managed under contract to HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) by Serco Group PLC on a 15-year contract. This contract is currently up for renewal. The prison, throughout the reporting year, has been operating close to its operating capacity.

The Governor of a private prison is referred to as the Director. They are required to be a certificated prison custody officer and are appointed under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 1991.

All private sector prisons have a Controller's team from HMPPS based in the prison. The role of the Controller is to monitor the contract between the Secretary of State for Justice and the private sector to ensure full compliance.

The prison has a certified normal accommodation, or CNA (the number of prisoners a prison can hold without being overcrowded), of 738<sup>1</sup>, revised in 2013, with an official operating capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) of 1145. The prison houses a male population consisting of approximately 45% sentenced prisoners, 25% remanded (awaiting trial or sentencing), 29% who are convicted and awaiting sentencing and 1% are awaiting immigration decisions.

The prison accommodation is made up of three houseblocks, each with four residential wings. The care and separation unit (CSU) where prisoners are kept apart from the rest of the prison population, has 21 cells, housed over two floors. Prisoners who require a higher level of support for mental health conditions or learning disabilities have separate accommodation - the Loft and the Annex - based on two landings in the healthcare centre.

The majority of single cells in the prison house two prisoners. Each cell contains a phone and has a TV with an in-cell computer management system, which allows prisoners to order canteen (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other items using their allocated funds), and book social visits, healthcare appointments and gym sessions. It also provides access to in-cell learning and direct communication with family via a messaging service.

The prison has a video conferencing centre containing interview rooms for legal visits, police interviews and court/parole hearings; a visits suite; a fully equipped gym complex; an education centre; a multi-faith centre; and a newly opened safer custody suite.

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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**

In May 2025, HMPPS conducted a survey to measure the quality of prison life (MQPL). Doncaster was measured against 25 comparable reception prisons in the period July 2024 to May 2025. The outcome of this survey states that HMP Doncaster is operating as the number one local prison in the country, which is excellent.

The Board has continued to operate at 40% capacity and, for much of the reporting year, we had three members supporting three new members going through the induction process. This has continued to severely limit the Board's ability to monitor all areas effectively.

#### **3.1 Main findings**

##### **Safety**

- It is the view of the Board that, despite the immense challenges faced by a very busy local prison running at approximately 55% over capacity, the management team continues to work hard to maintain a safe, calm and secure environment.
- Prisoner violence has seen an increase, however, in the reporting period. The Board's view is that this has been largely due to the continued severe overcrowding, an increase in the number of prisoners from out of the area and an increase in the number of gang-related issues. The Board is aware that robust action is being taken to address this issue.
- In the IMB prisoner survey, 63% of respondents said they felt safe in the prison.

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

- It remains the opinion of the Board that prisoners at HMP Doncaster are generally treated with fairness and respect. In the past few months, the prison, as part of the contract renewal bid, has overseen thorough and robust 'decency programme'. This has included the repainting of the houseblocks, cell repairs and the upgrading of showers, as well as a segregation project (CSU), which has seen electricity being restored to the cells, a mini gym installed and a full repainting programme.
- The Board does, however, need to address the continued high number of prisoners doubled up in single-cell accommodation. Whilst we acknowledge this remains out of the prison's control, it continues to undermine the prison's efforts to treat prisoners with fairness and humanity.

##### **Health and wellbeing**

- The Board believes that, overall, prisoners' health and wellbeing are being adequately catered for, despite the negative responses from our survey and the number of applications (prisoners' written applications to the IMB) that has been received during the reporting year. Waiting times for appointments remain fairly good, although it has been taking longer to get a GP referral. Social care in the prison appears good and the appointment of a drug and alcohol specialist with lived experience is having a positive impact already in the prison.

- Mental health services remain under significant pressure, which has led to delays in prisoners getting referrals. However, a new head of mental health has been appointed and is already having a positive impact.
- The Board, once again, highlights the wait for prisoners requiring a transfer to a mental health secure unit, which continues to severely impact on the deterioration in their mental health.

### **Progression and resettlement**

- From the Board's observations, the offender management unit (OMU) continues to work hard to support prisoners to show progress and prepare for resettlement. A total of 200 prisoners are released each month, one-third of them without notice, making it more difficult for services to provide timely support.
- Despite the well-documented challenges facing the Probation Service nationally, and the local probation staffing deficits at the prison, the probation provision has proved resilient. There is good evidence of close collaborative working between Serco and the Probation Service in the management of the OMU department.
- There is very good contact with families through creative family days (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings and events.) Both recall and remand prisoners seem well catered for and excellent support is provided through the 'departure lounge'.

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

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

- The Board remains extremely concerned about the prolonged delays transferring mentally ill patients to secure hospitals. What steps will the Minister take to urgently review and address this issue?
- When will the Minister undertake a comprehensive review of prisoners still serving indefinite sentences under the IPP regime, and what actions will be taken to address their situation?
- Given the significant backlog in the vetting system, which is causing lengthy delays for new officers and staff, what immediate steps will the Minister take to review and resolve this issue?
- The Board remains concerned about the high number of prisoners being released with no fixed abode? What steps will the Minister take to work with the relevant government departments to develop and implement a coordinated plan to address this serious issue?

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

- Overcrowding in the prison system continues. Can the Prison Service commit to supporting the recommendations of the Gauke review by prioritising the reduction in the backlog of court cases thereby shortening the time prisoners spend on remand?
- In the Board's view, the Probation Service nationally is critically understaffed and poorly managed, leaving people before and after release without proper support. This creates a 'revolving door' of reoffending and rising recidivism.

What action will the Prison Service take to fix staffing and management so individuals get the support they need to break this cycle?

#### **TO THE DIRECTOR**

- The Board continues to be concerned over the number of cell bells unanswered within the timeframe required? Can the Director assure the Board that this remains a priority for the prison?
- Internal property issues remain a concern for the Board and cause great frustration for prisoners. Will the Director commit to making the resolution of this issue a top priority in the coming year?
- The Board continues to be frustrated by the lengthy delays faced by staff and IMB members when using the Serco remote IT service, particularly for new members. This issue, common with other third-party providers, could have been resolved more quickly with on-site support. What action will you take to ensure faster, more reliable IT support and prevent these delays, especially for new IMB members?

#### **3.3 Response to the previous report**

| <b>Issues raised</b>   | <b>Response (abridged)</b>   | <b>Progress</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>To the Minister</b><br><br>The Board remains extremely concerned about the length of time transferring mentally ill patients to a secure hospital.  | The Mental Health Bill (November 24) will provide a new statutory time limit of 28 days for the transfer of patients with a mental health disorder from prison to hospital. The date on transfers and remissions is regularly reviewed and will be used to monitor compliance. An escalation process is in place for any individual cases that breach the timescales and guidance. | No improvement and long delays continue to the detriment of the health of these individuals. |
| The continued overcrowding within the prison and double occupancy of single cells remains a concern for the Board. Can the minister explain what measures are in place to reduce the prison population and double occupancy? | Plans are set out to deliver 14,000 new prison places and create a resilient prison estate, which includes the construction of four new prisons, as well as the expansion and refurbishment of the existing prison estate.   | No improvement.  |
| <b>To the Prison Service</b><br><br>The continued imprisonment of those  |  |  |

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|--|---|---|
| <p>prisoners who are serving indeterminate sentences (IPP) leaves them trapped within the system and with little hope of release. The Board acknowledges recent steps taken but feels that more needs to be done to prepare them for parole and potentially release.</p>   | <p>The Government is committed to working with organisations and campaign groups to ensure that the appropriate course of action is taken to support IPP prisoners. The implementation of the IPP Action Plan will ensure that they have robust and effective sentence plans.</p>   | <p>The OMU is working hard to support IPP prisoners at Doncaster, with regular forums and sentence planning. But this remains a serious issue for the prison estate as a whole.</p>                                     |
| <p>The lack of adequate probation and community support for prisoners being released into the community is impacting prisoners who, without the necessary accommodation and support, are more likely to reoffend. The Board requests that resources are provided to ensure that those who have been released have the opportunities available to them to be successfully rehabilitated.</p>  | <p>Commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) are designed to provide specialist support to individuals under probation supervision. This has recently been extended to include people on remand and those sentenced and released on the same day. HMPPS is currently reviewing the design and will be commissioning these services to ensure that, in future, people leaving custody will have access to a wider range of services to best meet their needs.</p> | <p>There remains a high number of prisoners released with NFA (no fixed abode) and, despite the best efforts of the prison, this remains a serious problem.</p>   |
| <p><b>To the Director</b><br/>The Board has identified a significant number of occasions when cell bells are not being answered. Whilst we welcome the continued scrutiny of cell-bell data and answering times, the issue remains a concern for the Board.</p> <p>Due to the increased pressures on the induction process, the Board requests that a review of the process is instigated to ensure all prisoners can access basic amenities and are treated fairly.</p> |   | <p>Cell bell times, while still an issue for the Board, continue to improve and are a key target for the prison.</p> <p>The induction process is constantly reviewed and good progress is being made by the prison.</p> |

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception and Induction**

Reception at Doncaster is an incredibly busy area and its effectiveness can impact the prisoner's experience of the establishment during the first few days/weeks. The increase in the movement of prisoners, due to changes in government policy (regarding releases), has had an impact on reception. Up to a third of arrivals at reception are from out of the area, mostly from the northeast. On average, reception processes over 100 prisoners a week and they are usually located to a houseblock within two to three hours.

The prison also has two dedicated induction wings. Despite the busy nature of this department, the Board has noted that staff tend to show a high level of respect and care for the men. This initial stage of the prisoner's journey appears, from the Board's monitoring, to be handled with respect, transparency and humanity.

The IMB has monitored prisoners in reception, where they are treated with decency, and their safety and wellbeing are considered. The reception area is a clean, tidy and welcoming environment, with lots of information. Staff in reception have been observed to have a professional attitude and appear calm, and their communication with prisoners is good. Members have observed checks and assessments, and reception staff are very helpful in showing us the process. This includes the use of the body scanner. Healthcare sees each prisoner to assess risks and health needs. Time taken in reception by healthcare to assess prisoners differs and an increasing number of ACCT assessment, care in custody and teamwork) plans (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) have to be opened. The reception healthcare screening process is thorough, although this alone can be incredibly complex. Healthcare has appointed an extra late-shift health professional to assist with the backlog, as well as the busy influx of prisoners arriving late in the evening.

The Board has noted that many prisoners arriving at Doncaster have a wide range of complex needs, including health and/or mental health issues. This creates challenges in processing prisoners, putting increased pressure on the reception staff and the healthcare department.

At reception, each prisoner has the opportunity for a meal and a shower. They are provided with a pack that includes toiletries and bed linen. They are offered the opportunity to make a phone call, the process for this is displayed on the wall. Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to offer confidential emotional peer support and orderlies, also known as Insiders, trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) prepare first-night packs and food for prisoners coming into reception. When prisoners arrive, Insiders go through the induction booklet with them and explain how they will be supported. There is a noticeably clear system, which is followed well, in the Board's view.

Buses arriving late to Doncaster mean late closure of reception too frequently. This puts unreasonable pressure on staff, when they are required to work past 10pm. This is also unsettling for new arrivals and creates disruption on the wings as Insiders return to wings late. Systems in place seem to run well; however, late

closure of reception is not always due to the late arrival of buses and is often impacted by the complex needs of each individual.

Men leaving Doncaster via reception are given a leaflet, 'Leaving Prison,' which is written by the chaplaincy team in conjunction with the resettlement team. The leaflet is well written and informative. It covers key information and advice on accommodation, offers support with finances, suitable work or education, as well as information about health services and organisations that can provide support such as faith communities.

From a survey sent to prisoners in Doncaster in the reporting year, almost all metrics are up compared with last year. There has been a huge improvement in the number of people who state they were given an opportunity to make a phone call on arrival, with the proportion more than doubling, from 33% to 70%. From the survey 77% are provided with a pin (personal identification number) for the phone on arrival, compared with 72% last year.

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

The Board was concerned that the prison was issued with a Performance Improvement Notice (PIN) for ACCTs following one death in custody. This is a formal process used to address staff performance. The prison has taken action to make structural changes to help ensure this does not happen again.

Between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025, the prison has recorded 1063 incidents of self-harm, carried out by 315 prisoners. This shows an increase of 28% over the previous reporting year. The number of prisoners self-harming has increased from 301 to 315, up from 2.7 to 3.37 incidents per prisoner. Overall, the number of self-harm incidents is not always representative, as some prisoners may self-harm a number of times in a day.

During the reporting year, the prison has opened a safer custody centre for prisoners who are at risk of self-harm. There have been 1027 referrals to the centre since it opened. Referrals are made by custodial managers, prisoner offender managers, prison custody officers and by the general application process on the in-cell technology. The prison has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from prisoners using the centre.

Prisoners have 24/7 access to Listeners and the Samaritans through their in-cell phones.

Whilst some improvements have been made, the Board remains concerned that cell bells are not answered within five minutes, as detailed in the local policy. Of those prisoners who completed the prisoner survey, 85% felt that cell bells were not answered either 'not very often' or 'not at all'. The prison is addressing this issue and focusing on prevention and developing a survey for prisoners to better understand the reasoning behind excessive in-cell calls.

There were nine deaths in custody during the reporting year. Of these, eight were suspected to be due to natural causes, and one remains under investigation, so the IMB is unable to comment on any recommendations. The Board wishes to express its condolences to the families of those deceased, as well as those involved in dealing with these events.

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

Recorded prisoner-on-prisoner violence in the prison has shown an increase of around 23%, compared with the previous year (247 in 2023-2024; 303 in 2024-2025). Incidents involving violence occur across the prison, with no wing or houseblock a particular hotspot. Around one-third of prisoner-on-prisoner violent incidents are linked to gang-related issues. The prison seeks to identify known associations as part of the reception process and accommodates prisoners around the prison to help limit incidents. Prisoners can sometimes be reluctant to declare known associations. Efforts to cross-check and combine information should be encouraged to identify associations that prisoners do not identify themselves.

Over 50% of violent prisoner-on-prisoner incidents are between those sharing a cell. This highlights the impact of overcrowding. Prison data has identified that debt, bullying and theft are other identified causes of violent incidents.

Young adult violence was on a downward trend by the end of the reporting year which the Board was pleased about. There were occasions in the year where young adults from out-of-area communities were located in the prison where gang issues also played a part. The prison identified this additional challenge and addressed it promptly, which was good to see.

In the Board's view, the management team has a clear plan in place for early intervention, which continues to include the Listener scheme and the Buddy scheme (both involving peer support to help prevent self-harm and suicide) and the Samaritans, who are available 24-hours a day. The introduction of the safer custody centre is an excellent addition to the prison, providing a positive environment where prisoners can learn to co-exist and interact constructively with one another.

The prison continues to hold a 'safety week' each year, which is attended by key organisations such as the Samaritans and Shout (a charity that offers mental health support) a wellbeing roadshow, information desks, demonstrations and targeted scenarios. The Board acknowledges the hard work of the leadership team to address the problem of violence. The increase in incidents is, nevertheless, an obvious concern, and increased efforts to reduce violence are encouraged.

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

The prison continues to carefully monitor use of force in the prison (UoF). There is evidence that incidents are reported promptly and there is effective scrutiny and analysis. A weekly review of each incident is undertaken, with a full monthly review identifying trends and any areas that need increased attention. An action plan is maintained and progressed.

This year, the Board's focus has been to increase our observations of *planned* UoF incidents. By identifying potential incidents, this allows better management of volatile prisoners and protects staff. An example of the improvement is that, between April and June, there was a 25% fall in the number of unplanned incidents.

The Board has also witnessed planned removals on the wing and being present at pre and de briefings and the board has observed them being carried out in a professional manner. On a number of occasions, this has allowed a planned incident to be carried out with no UoF or Pava incapacitant spray and batons are used very infrequently.

Records include analysis of UoF incidents by age and ethnicity and there is no evidence that any particular group experiences a disproportionate UoF.

Incident reviews includes examining footage from body worn video cameras (BWVC). The majority of incidents are recorded and the increased incidence of planned UoF supports this. However, not all staff will wear BWVC, because of a lack of availability of equipment. The prison is seeking funding to ensure more officers are equipped with BWVC.

#### **4.4 Preventing illicit items**

As with the majority of establishments around the country, there has been an increase in the number of illicit items into the prison. Drones remain a serious threat at the prison and the senior management team has made this a key priority in the past year. From the Boards observations they are proactive in responding quickly to the fast-changing situation regarding how illicit items enter the prison and adapting quickly to these changes. Earlier in the year, there was an increase in drugs entering the prison, leading to a spike in the number of prisoners under the influence (UTI) and those being admitted to hospital. The prison acted swiftly with a complete lockdown, drafting in officers from other Serco establishments to conduct a thorough search of the wings.

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

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

The Board is still concerned that the prison remains overcrowded, and too many people are accommodated in cells designed for one person. The Board accepts that the prison tries to make the very best of this situation, even though this is beyond the prison's control.

The showers have been refurbished and look brighter and appear easier to keep clean. There are still some issues with flies and the ventilation system. All houseblocks have a shower that is accessible for prisoners with an additional need or a disability.

All cells have a working call system. The Board is still concerned by the number of cell bells that, once activated, are not responded to within the five-minute requirement. Indeed, during our monitoring, we have frequently witnessed cell bells being ignored by staff for up to 20 minutes. Our prisoner survey showed that 85% of prisoners who responded indicated that cell bells are either not answered at all or 'not very often'. The prison is, however, working hard to understand why activations are so high, as reducing these should improve response times.

Phone calls and the cost to prisoners have been recurring issues during the reporting period. HMP Doncaster charges more per call than similar prisons in the public sector. The Board is pleased to say that this has been addressed by Serco and calls are now charged on a par with the public sector.

Our survey reveals that mattresses are an issue for prisoners. Of the 539 who responded to the survey, 358 (66%) indicated that having a better mattress was a high priority. The Board understands that the prison has a replacement-and-renewal programme for mattresses.

The quality, portion size and variety of food served remains a concern for prisoners, although the Board acknowledges that applications to us regarding food remain low. The prison provides each prisoner with a breakfast pack each day. Lunch is a cold lunch, usually a sandwich, a pasty or a salad, crisps and fresh fruit or a dessert. Our survey shows that 37% felt that the portion size could be improved and 25% indicated that they would like more variety on the menus. Our observations when monitoring show that the quality of food varies and is sometimes undercooked.

The food serveries are mostly clean and tidy. Prisoners who look after this area of the prison take a pride in their job. The main kitchen is well equipped, and during the current reporting year, most of the kitchen equipment has been operational and working. From our observations, hygiene and training of prisoners in food preparation are a high priority.

### **5.2 Segregation and special accommodation**

The care and separation unit (CSU), where men are segregated/kept apart from the rest of the prison population, is situated over two floors. It consists of 21 single cells, two of which are high-visibility cells to allow for constant supervision of vulnerable prisoners. Prisoners are placed in the unit either for GOoD (good order or discipline) or for their own protection. They may also be held in segregation on cellular

confinement (CC), post adjudication (a disciplinary hearing held when a prisoner is suspected of having broken prison rules,)

At the beginning of the reporting year, the unit was a very austere setting, with no electricity, and little to occupy prisoners. Wind-up radios were available but were easily broken and therefore constantly in short supply. During the current reporting year the prison has been working on improving the unit, aiming to create a more purposeful and therapeutic environment, and this has now been completed.

The regime has been improved. Prisoners collect their meals at the servery and one cell has been converted into a small gym for those who are compliant. The book trolley in the unit is refreshed more often and there is more choice for those having difficulty reading. Electricity has been installed, allowing for in-cell technology so that prisoners can order canteen and make applications for other services. Cells have been refurbished and painted, with a distraction blackboard on the walls. From the Board's monitoring of GOoD and disciplinary review boards, notification of moves to the unit and paperwork, we conclude that the segregation process is used appropriately, although it has remained very busy throughout the year.

The Board acknowledges the efforts of the staff and management in the unit. Despite constant pressure, they remain empathetic and supportive of the prisoners in their care, fostering a more positive culture in the unit and across the prison, with the management team providing additional training and weekly support to officers

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

#### **5.3.1 Staffing**

The Board's observations when monitoring is that overall, staff and prisoner relationships remain good. The prison now has a full complement of staff, which has helped to support the recent opening up of the regime and prisoners having more time out of their cells. The Board believes this has to more positive interactions between staff and prisoners.

During the current reporting year, the prison has created a dedicated bed-watch team for outside hospital visits to help alleviate the problems of staff shortages. This seems to have led to a marked reduction in lockdown (red regime days) which is when the prison operates under its most restricted regime because of severe staff shortages or safety concerns on the houseblocks.

Weekly prisoners' consultation committee meetings are held, giving the houseblock representatives the opportunity to discuss prisoner concerns, plus monthly meetings, chaired by an Assistant Director. The Board has observed some of the meetings and believes there are good relationships, which offers two-way communication between staff and prisoner.

From our observations whilst monitoring, the Board noted complaints from prisoners about difficulties in being heard and in having simple requests fulfilled. The Board believes this issue largely stems from the high proportion of younger, less experienced staff. At the end of the reporting period, 51% of prison officers employed at Doncaster had less than three years' experience. The Board has also witnessed occasions when officers failed to pick up and address minor infringements, such as vaping on the wing. The management team is aware of this and has implemented a robust training programme to provide ongoing support.

### **5.3.2 Key workers**

The key worker scheme, introduced by HMPPS in 2018 as part of the offender management in custody (OMiC) model, aims to facilitate regular, structured discussions between staff and prisoners focused on rehabilitation, safety and security. The prison aims for all key workers to meet with prisoners on a regular basis. The Board has evidence of good practice with this programme; regular interactions are recorded and boundaries and expectations clearly explained.

The prison is monitoring this area and has set targets on both the number of sessions and, most importantly, the quality of the sessions. It is working towards setting up key worker hubs on each of the houseblocks to support this. The Board carried out a mini survey of the process and whilst there remain some inconsistencies in the sessions, they seem to be conducted fairly regularly and where possible, with the same person. A total of 80% of prisoners who responded to the survey had had a key worker session within two weeks. The Board will continue to focus on this area in the coming year.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

There is a monthly diversity and equality meeting (DEAT), where staff discuss and analyse a wide range of data related to the six protected characteristics (which include race, religion, age disability, sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation) across areas such as segregation, complaints, use of force and education. The purpose is to ensure that appropriate strategies are put in place to support prisoners.

In the reporting year, 121 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) were submitted, three of which were upheld. From the Boards observations the DIRF process is robustly quality assured by the senior leadership team.

To offer support to prisoners there is a dedicated equalities representative on each wing, who can help with issues relating to discrimination. However, in the Board's survey, it was disappointing to find that 59% of prisoners were unaware of what a DIRF is, and 62% stated they did not know how to submit one. Additionally, the Board has received concerns from prisoners that DIRFs are not always thoroughly investigated and there remains, to some extent, a lack of trust in the system.

Throughout the year, the diversity and equality team organises a number of events to raise awareness and to acknowledge and celebrate minority groups such as Black History Month, Roma and Traveller communities, LGBTQ+ and Ramadan, to name a few.

#### **5.4.1 Foreign national prisoners**

The foreign national prisoner team consists of two experienced and enthusiastic staff, who work hard to support the wide and diverse needs of this cohort. At the end of the reporting period, there were 112 foreign national prisoners in HMP Doncaster, comprising around 10% of the prison population and encompassing 37 different nationalities other than British. The three largest ethnic groups in the prison consist of Albanian (17.86%); Iranian/Lithuanian (8.04%); and Slovakian (7.16%).

Although security remains the top priority, wherever possible prisoners of the same nationality are housed on the same wing. In August of this year the prison housed 16

foreign nationals who could not speak any English. To support them, staff use an effective translation tool called The Big Word, which enables clear communication and ensures that important and urgent Home Office documentation can be conveyed accurately. Wherever possible, prisoners are employed on the wing to assist, as the prison does not have a designated staff translator. The Board commends the team for their knowledge, support, and professionalism in managing these challenges.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

All faiths are represented and supported by the chaplaincy team. The faiths supported on a more regular basis are Free Church, Pagan, Church of England, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and Jehovah Witness. The position of Church of England minister has been vacant for around four months, and recruitment to fill the role is currently underway. There are two chaplaincy volunteers who each come into the prison once a week. There are two prison orderlies who work in the area supporting the chaplaincy team and preparing the chapel and rooms for services, prayers and meetings, etc.

The chaplaincy team provides support everyone in HMP Doncaster, offering pastoral care to all, including those who are vulnerable, bereaved or distressed. From the Board's observations, they offer a high level of support to prisoners during difficult times.

At induction, prisoners are offered a leaflet that details the services provided by the chaplaincy team. The leaflet is bright and accessible and includes information about the services and what chaplaincy offers, etc. Chaplaincy seems to demonstrates the utmost personal and professional integrity, truthfulness, honesty, compassion and careful attention to everyone. Prisoners can apply to attend services, bible study classes, prayers, as well as other support using in-cell technology.

A member from the chaplaincy team sees prisoners within the first few days of their arrival. Someone from the chaplaincy team sees all the prisoners in the care and separation unit. The team is seen to be present and active in multi-disciplinary meetings.

They have a wall chart in the office with dates for all celebrations for all faiths, and all these celebrations take place at HMP Doncaster. The chaplaincy team is in regular communication with the catering manager regarding religious dietary needs.

They have a link with Prison Fellowship and facilitate the Angel Tree project: with the authorisation of the security team, prisoners can apply for a Christmas present to be posted to their children on their behalf.

Bereavement support is offered to anyone who would like it, regardless of having a faith or not. The chaplaincy team liaise with the security team when a prisoner requests to attend the funeral of a close family member. If attendance at the funeral is not authorised and a video link is available, arrangements can be made for the prisoner to watch the service in the chapel. Alternatively, a candlelit memorial service can be organised.

The chapel is a large, spacious area used for worship, services, prayers, events and meetings. There are several smaller rooms, which are used regularly for prayers and study groups. The entrance area to the chapel and the smaller rooms are bright and welcoming and there are lots of free resources available covering all faiths.

The Board has observed the chaplaincy team working well together and recognises the invaluable work they do to help support prisoners and their families, as well as staff.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

The prison, as a contracted-out establishment, has a local policy for dealing with, and managing, incentives for prisoners. This local policy is in line with the HMPPS Policy Framework. The incentives scheme appears to work satisfactorily. Prisoners are made aware when their behaviour warrants a change in the incentive level. Reviews of prisoners on the basic (lowest) level appear to be carried out in a timely manner. The Board's monitoring has shown that most prisoners are reviewed in line with the policy. All prisoners are set targets for them to work towards to improve their behaviour. There is good evidence to show that the basic regime is not overly used to deny prisoners their regime or entitlements, with around 8% of prisoners on this lowest level at any one time.

## **5.7 Complaints**

During the reporting year, a total of 1673 complaints were received from prisoners, which is a fall, from 1856 in the previous 12 months. Of these complaints, approximately 24% were upheld. In the Board's prisoner survey, a larger proportion of prisoners claimed to receive a timely response from the complaints clerk (73%), compared with 66% a year ago; however, only 42% claim they received a response within the timeframe required, which was 6% down from last year.

HMP Doncaster is a busy local reception prison, and as expected, the majority of complaints relate to property (28%), followed by issues concerning residential matters.

## **5.8 Property**

The Board is concerned about the way the prison manages property. Our observations have found that there are examples of poor record keeping and managing and handling of prisoners' property, especially in residential areas of the prison. There appears to be sporadic recording and logging of prisoners' property in some areas of the prison.

The prison uses digital property cards, but these do not seem to work satisfactorily. Prisoners do not sign for their property, leading to a lack of evidence of items that have been received or recorded.

The Board's prisoner survey has shown that 259 prisoners - 48% of those who responded - had lost property or had property mislaid during their stay at the prison. Among those who responded to the survey question on lost property, 50% reported that they had not received any compensation from the prison.

Some property appears to go missing whilst the prisoner is out of prison, at court or on transfer from another prison. Prisoners submit complaints about property, but these complaints appear to not always be resolved satisfactorily. Towards the end of the reporting year, the prison conducted a full review of how it handles property and an action plan has been developed to improve outcomes. The Board will continue to monitor this in the coming year, as this has a significant impact on prisoners' wellbeing.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

Healthcare at HMP Doncaster is provided by Practice Plus Group. Healthcare strives for continuity of care and promotes a holistic model of care from early days in custody right through to release and transfer.

The healthcare unit is set over three floors, with a main reception area and consulting rooms on the main landing and two separate floors: the Annex, where prisoners with complex social needs are housed; and the Loft, which is designed to support those with mental health issues.

The healthcare unit is extremely busy. It provides a 24-hour service and includes mental health, dentistry, physiotherapy, ophthalmology and podiatry, as well as the substance misuse team. Through monitoring, the Board has observed reasonable access to all services and surgeries, and staff are supportive of their patients' needs. In possession (IP) medication is reviewed regularly by the pharmacy team and the prison has a high number of prisoners with IP medication.

Healthcare has been the largest category for applications to the IMB this year, accounting for 18% of all submissions. On investigation, however, the Board invariably found that the applications were due to either prisoners refusing to attend appointments made, not taking the medication prescribed or not agreeing with the medication offered. In our annual prisoner survey, 68% stated that they felt that healthcare was poor but during the course of the year, when dealing with prisoner applications regarding healthcare, this was not found generally to be the case.

There is a robust healthcare complaints system in place, which has three levels of escalation, as well as an external audit of complaints to ensure consistency, and these are reviewed regularly.

### **6.2 Mental health**

Mental health services at the prison are provided by Practice Plus Group. HMP Doncaster has a high number of men with complex mental health needs and pressure on mental healthcare has increased during the reporting year.

The appointment of a new clinical matron has improved response times for referrals to the mental health team. Referrals appear to be dealt with promptly. However, the Board has been concerned about where prisoners with complex needs can be accommodated.

Many prisoners spend long periods waiting for transfer to a secure mental health setting. This ongoing problem was highlighted in the Board's previous report. In the reporting year, nine patients were transferred to secure mental health hospitals, although only four (less than 50%) were within the statutory 28-day guidelines, with one prisoner waiting 93 days for a transfer. Four prisoners are currently awaiting a secure bed.

The Board recognises that these delays are beyond the control of the prison or healthcare provider. However, they often result in prisoners being held under segregated conditions, where their mental health deteriorates further - an outcome the Board considers unacceptable. This also places an extra burden on the prison,

as extra staffing is required and the Board recognises the challenge this is for the officers who continue to provide the best possible support to these men.

The prison benefits from the Loft, which provides additional care and support for prisoners with mental health conditions. The newly opened safer custody centre also offers a range of activities, including weekly sessions with White Post Farm, where prisoners can interact with some of their smaller animals.

### **6.3 Social care**

Social care is provided by Practice Plus group to those who are assessed as needing it. Prisoners regularly receive visits from occupational therapy regarding mobility aids, such as wheelchairs and therapy services.

The Annex (social care unit/SCU) contains 16 beds: six for men requiring social care, seven for prisoners undergoing bariatric treatment (specialist care for individuals with obesity), one for a patient receiving palliative care, one for a cancer patient, and one for a prisoner who is deaf and blind.

There is regular staffing in the SCU, which helps provide good and consistent support for patients. There are also prisoners working in the unit, assisting and supporting with tasks such as ordering canteen and cleaning cells.

The prison has 57 men on personal escape and evaluation plans (PEEPs), which provide assistance for those who cannot get themselves out of the prison unaided in an emergency.

When a person falls ill at the prison and there is a possibility of a death by natural causes, a family liaison officer is appointed who keeps in touch with the family.

There are two social workers in the social care team who, along with the healthcare clinical lead, assess the need for care.

If a prisoner requires social care after release, the prison's social care team liaises with the local council to arrange appropriate support in the community.

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

Time out of cell has been reviewed during the year and good staffing levels have allowed an improved regime to be adopted. Typically, prisoners will now be out of their cell from 8.30am to 11.45am, then again from 1.30pm to 4.30pm During the time out of their cells, prisoners can take a shower, engage in exercise and have at least two sessions of structured activity, unless there is a restricted regime.

The incidence of restricted regime is low. Fully curtailed regime ('red regime') will occur once per month for a planned staff training day. Planned red days are well communicated to prisoners in advance through the in cell technology and the incidence of unplanned red days has become exceptionally rare, which is a positive development.

Prisoners appear to welcome more time out of their cells, although this does bring with it other challenges. The regime requires prisoners not to vape whilst on association on the wing. This means there are prolonged periods when prisoners are not meant to use vapes. This creates a potential conflict point with prison staff. It is clear that some prison staff manage the issue by failing to enforce this aspect of the regime, which then undermines prisoner discipline generally. It is understood that the

prison is exploring the possibility of a dedicated vaping area on each wing, but no firm plans were in place at the end of the current reporting year.

Facilities on the wings include pool tables, which are well used. Many of those tables are old and now in a poor state of repair. It is understood that the prison is seeking to renew a number of tables, a change that is expected to bring multiple benefits.

The sports academy at the prison aims to provide a physical education and recreational activity programme within a safe, secure and a zero-tolerance environment. All prisoners have the opportunity to attend the gym twice a week to use the weights and cardio equipment and to play football or other games, supported by qualified instructors. Prisoners appear to engage well with these facilities.

## **6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

Practice Plus Group continues to support substance misuse services (SMS) in the prison. From our observations the substance misuse team works hard to support prisoners with addictions, helping them progress towards successful rehabilitation. At the end of the current reporting year the team had 303 prisoners on their caseload. Over the reporting year, there was an average of 232 referrals each month to the team - an increase from 198 the previous year - partly due to a higher prisoner turnover ('churn'), which continues to place pressure on resources. Despite this, assessments and releases continue to remain a priority for the team.

The Director and his team have appointed a full-time drug and alcohol recovery specialist—a former prisoner at HMP Doncaster with lived experience of addiction. He is an enthusiastic advocate of a holistic approach to recovery and is already helping to foster a culture of rehabilitation within the prison.

He is working closely with the substance misuse team to introduce recovery workshops, delivered by former offenders with lived experience, as part of a 'recovery month'. A recent highlight was the recovery games,' where teams of prisoners competed in outdoor activities such as penalty shootouts and tug-of-war, which was very well received.

## **6.6 Soft skills**

The IMB notes that teaching soft skills can be crucial in assisting offenders to reintegrate into society. Prisoners can develop these skills through educational and enrichment programmes. Soft skills enable prisoners to focus on communication and teamwork, enabling them to build positive relationships and, possibly, address underlying issues that may contribute to criminal behaviour. The Board believes that prisoners have the opportunity to develop these skills in the prison setting.

The visits centre hosts numerous activities, which include parenting skills and cooking classes. Family days, which bring together prisoners and their families outside of the statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings, have been successful and well attended and information is readily available regarding wellbeing on posters throughout the prison.

The Pathway and Progression to Work booklet covers essential skills such as planning, timekeeping, and communication. It also focuses on interpersonal abilities, including effective conversation and teamwork.

The Board has observed the pride some of the prisoners take in their peer support roles (including Buddies and Listeners) and has seen the positive interactions this creates between the men. We have observed that a range of programmes and activities are available to support prisoners' wellbeing and develop their skills. These initiatives also demonstrate a commitment to providing support on an equal basis.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

Education in the prison is delivered by Novus under the PEF (Prison Education Framework). The model of education and work focuses on assessment, engagement and employability skills and is based on five core principles of teamwork, communication, self-management, problem solving and presentation.

The education, skills and work curriculum was designed to complement prison work and focus on upskilling – thereby preparing the prisoner to adopt a ‘can-do culture’ to support and improve the chances of a successful rehabilitation.

All prisoners are assessed during their induction period. They are given a booklet explaining their options and a personal learning plan (PLP) is created. These are conducted as part of the information, advice and guidance (IAG) induction process and allocated to appropriate courses. Prisoners with special educational needs or disabilities are identified, and appropriate help and support are provided. A dedicated ‘learning journey’ visually illustrates progression, and posters throughout the prison clearly signpost this pathway, along with entry requirements and job opportunities.

Classrooms are bright, spacious and well-equipped, providing a supportive environment for learning. They offer a wide range of education and training opportunities, including functional skills, catering and hospitality, and essential life skills - from Entry Level 3 up to Level 2. There is also the opportunity for prisoners to enrol on Open University courses.

There is an excellent media suite, offering digital media (Levels 1 and 2), as well as a computer classroom, a wide range of physical education courses to Level 2, and the opportunity to work towards a Level 3 course in emergency first aid and personal training.

From our observations the prison is working hard to improve literacy and reading throughout and has had a visit from author Lee Child, who led workshops and provided a large number of copies of his first book. He intends to work further with the prison to support a creative writing challenge and this has been very well received by the prisoners who attended. Reading champions are being introduced on the wings to support reading. The prison held a House of Commons debate to promote British values, which was well attended.

The library has been refurbished during the reporting year and has a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books, as well as legal and religious texts. Access to the library is on a weekly rota basis and the staff are proactive in helping support prisoners.

### **7.2 Vocational training, work**

The establishment offers a variety of vocational courses that aim to meet the needs of the prison population and give men the knowledge, self-esteem and confidence, providing them with the transferable skills necessary to prepare them for release. This includes a textiles workshop, print shop, laundry, horticulture and catering. The hospitality department provides food preparation services, including a barista qualification in the staff coffee shop, Doncosta. Rail track offers training, both in the

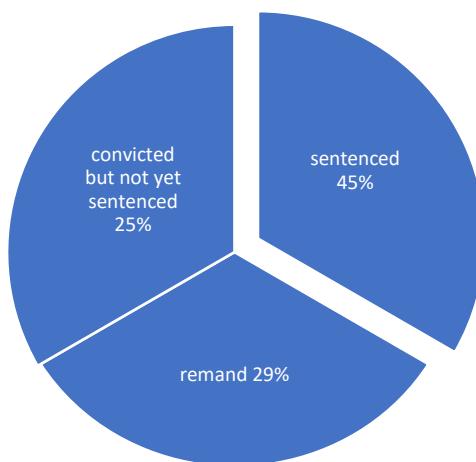
classroom and on the purpose-built rail track at the prison, and is able to offer job opportunities on release.

Market Street is a series of small workshops that offers a range of practical activities for prisoners, including cycle repair, woodwork and textiles. Products are then sold in the visits area shop and to staff. This workplace is designed to offer purposeful activity for the more vulnerable prisoners, allowing them to work in a more relaxed environment.

Improving attendance at education, work, and training has been a key priority for the prison. Throughout the reporting year, attendance has increased significantly, driven by a concerted effort that combined incentives with sanctions. Attendance rates regularly hit the 80% mark in the mornings. Attendance to the afternoon sessions remain slightly lower, but continues to improve.

### 7.3 Offender management, progression

From the Boards observations the offender management unit (OMU) has worked hard over the past 12 months to respond to the ever-changing population, implementing strategies and interventions to meet the demands these changes create.



The above pie chart shows that, at the end of the reporting year, 54% of the prison population remain unsentenced. Due to ongoing court delays, these individuals often serve longer than sentenced prisoners, who have the added support of a prison offender manager.

The OMU team at HMP Doncaster has introduced a dedicated remand team to provide enhanced support for those with priority needs, such as legal assistance and help for high-risk individuals in collaboration with probation. The team also encourages involvement in purposeful activities, and prisoners can self-refer through the application system.

There is also a significant rise in recall prisoners returning to custody, particularly those on 14-day recall, which presents difficulties due to the short timeframe in preparing them for release. The OMU works alongside the psychology team to identify reasons why they have been recalled, the barriers they face and how they

can contribute to the wider prison. Recalls currently make up 10% of the prison's population and, on average, the prison receives 100 per month.

### **7.3.1 Indeterminate sentences for IPP prisoners**

It is acknowledged that HMP Doncaster is not the right environment for prisoners on IPP (imprisonment for public protection) sentences. However, the Board has seen evidence of the work staff at the prison put into the planning and support for prisoners on IPP sentences. During the reporting year, there have been between nine and 13 IPP prisoners at any one time.

Monthly multi-disciplinary meetings are held to review prisoners serving IPP sentences. These meetings are attended by an OMU manager, the prisoner's offender manager (POM), and a member of the psychology team. A Board member has observed most of these sessions. Discussions focus on progression plans, treatment options, and available courses for each individual.

Also considered in the meetings are progress, possible transfers, courses, outstanding assessments, case management and property issues. Each prisoner has a progression plan and a sentence plan. Minutes and action points are produced from the meetings. Progression panels are held for 'stuck' cases. Outcomes and recommendations from the meetings are submitted to the Director.

Different approaches are tried to progress prisoners on IPP sentences including psychological assessments and treatments, transfers to more suitable establishments and the use of key workers. Support is offered to help prisoners on IPP sentences prepare for their release, such as, for example, help with CVs and what the parole board looks for in an interview.

Prisoners on IPP sentences are allocated a POM and a key worker, who have experience and an understanding of the IPP sentence. The majority of prisoner on IPP sentences say they feel prepared for their parole hearing and 'next steps' are explained clearly.

Bi-monthly forums for prisoners serving IPP sentences are facilitated by a POM and a psychologist, both of whom are highly experienced. Separate forums are run in the prison for vulnerable prisoners (VPs) and the main population. Feedback from men on IPP sentences at the prison regarding the forums is that they feel listened to and it is good to meet with others in similar circumstances.

There are also regional online meetings to discuss RAG (red, amber, green) ratings - a traffic-light system used to assess risk and progress - and progression plans for prisoners serving IPP sentences. A member of the Board has regularly observed these meetings.

### **7.4 Family contact**

Support to prisoners and their family and friends is provided by Families First in the prison. The team does an excellent job of helping to maintain family ties through direct and indirect contact throughout the week and at weekends.

Support is provided on social visits; a family support worker attends visits and offers introduction and advice to new visitors. There is a good atmosphere in the visits hall and an impressive number of activities to support families visiting. There is a shop in the visits hall that sells items prisoners have made, such as, for example cushions,

bags, paintings and soft toys. The shop is popular with visitors and prisoners like to have their work in the shop. There is a café, called 'Tick Tock Coffee Shop' situated in the visits hall, which sells a wide range of hot and cold snacks and drinks at reasonable prices.

The Families First team runs eight family days a year. They run separate events for vulnerable prisoners and the main prison population. Members of the Board have observed some of these family events and found them to be very well run and the families reporting how good they are. For example, at a summer family event attended by 30 prisoners and their families, activities were held on the astroturf, including face painting, games, and photo opportunities with loved ones. A fish and chip van and an ice cream van were also provided, creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

Doncaster Rover Football Club visit the prison twice a year and take sessions with children and young people who have a connected person in prison. They also organise occasional events, such as sessions led by a specialist who engages children visiting the prison in imaginative play. There is a room that has been fitted out with items suitable for babies, and dads can meet in that room for a visit with their baby under six months old and the baby's carer. The room is well equipped, and dads can feed and bathe their baby during the visit. The team facilitates Storybook Dads, where dads can be filmed with a background of their choice reading a story to send as a DVD or a video message to their children.

Families First organises numerous activities for the men in the prison, including a social kitchen (learning to cook), homework dads, arts and craft groups, veterans, care experienced and a group for over 50s who meet weekly to play games, etc. Also offered is a gardening club, chair yoga, chair bowls and therapy dogs. The team offers relationship courses and parenting courses.

The Families First team is dedicated to ensuring positive contact between prisoners and their family and friends. Visitors have spoken with members of the Board about the extra things on offer, such as, for example, several visits in the same week are offered to families who live far away and have to travel.

Social video calls are available during visiting sessions and prisoners also have in cell phones, which can help maintain family and friends contact.

The Director has received several letters from families expressing gratitude for the Families First initiative and the valuable support it provides.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

The prison holds regular resettlement/accommodation events to focus on those being released within a 12-week timeframe. This allows prisoners to access services such as NACRO (a social justice charity) the Department for Work and Pensions, POMs and the pre-release team.

The 'departure lounge', based just outside the prison, has a holistic approach to supporting those on release. There are two dedicated staff in the team who work hard with community agencies to support prisoners and their families providing, if needed, food packs, clothing, hygiene products and sleeping bags. A total of 20% of releases from the prison are recorded as NFA (no fixed abode), and due to ongoing

population pressures, an increasing number of these individuals are from outside the local area.

The resettlement process is managed by the OMU and NACRO, the CRS provider.

Approximately 200 prisoners were released each month in the reporting year.

Early releases have meant that some prisoners do not feel they are fully prepared. The Board's prisoner survey showed that a relatively high number of prisoners who responded to the survey (38%) felt that they 'were unlikely to be prepared' for release. This number compares with 8% in the previous year

The prison organises a monthly resettlement 'carousel' for prisoners due for release within 16 weeks. Held in the prison chapel and coordinated by the OMU, the event brings together agencies and charities that provide support with accommodation, employment, finances, substance misuse treatment, probation, benefits and other essential services. The specific support offered to each prisoner depends on their destination and circumstances on release.

The 'departure lounge', run by NACRO, provides a holistic, 'one stop' service for prisoners as they prepare to leave custody. The team consists of two dedicated staff members, supported by volunteers and service providers, who assist prisoners with making phone calls, securing housing and employment and accessing essential items such as food, clothing and footwear. These items are generously donated by local charities and individuals.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Recommended complement of Board members                      | 12  |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 6   |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period   | 5   |
| Total number of visits to the establishment                  | 282 |

### Applications to the IMB

| Code | Subject   | Previous reporting year | Current reporting year |
|------|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| A    | Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions  | 15                      | 24                     |
| B    | Discipline, including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions  | 4                       | 18                     |
| C    | Equality  | 22                      | 20                     |
| D    | Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell  | 30                      | 30                     |
| E1   | Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions  | 21                      | 32                     |
| E2   | Finance, including pay, private monies, spends  | 21                      | 15                     |
| F    | Food and kitchens   | 9                       | 12                     |
| G    | Health, including physical, mental, social care   | 59                      | 58                     |
| H1   | Property within the establishment   | 26                      | 30                     |
| H2   | Property during transfer or in another facility   | 17                      | 25                     |
| H3   | Canteen, facility list, catalogues  | 2                       | 1                      |
| I    | Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation. | 15                      | 20                     |
| J    | Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying   | 38                      | 28                     |
| K    | Transfers   | 3                       | 5                      |
| L    | Miscellaneous   | 1                       | 17                     |
|      | <b>Total</b>  | <b>283</b>              | <b>335</b>             |

## Annex A

### Prisoner survey

The Board conducted an annual survey, which received responses from nearly 50% of the prison population. Below are the main findings.

#### Main points - 2025 survey

##### Strengths

- Almost all metrics in relation to people arriving at the prison have increased. In particular, there is a huge improvement in the number of prisoners able to make a phone call on arrival – more than double the number of last year (33% to 70%).
- 88% of respondents claim to have had the chance to speak to healthcare staff and have a healthcare check on arrival.
- General awareness of who the Listeners are is significantly better than last year (up from 49% to 72%), with more understanding of how to contact them.
- More people are provided with a phone PIN code on arrival than last year (77% from 72%).
- There is a slight increase (10%) in the number of people being offered a clothing parcel (64%).

##### Areas for development

- Only 45% of prisoners who responded to the survey state that the work and education they are undertaking is preparing them for release
- Only 40% of prisoners from the survey knew what a DIRF is, with a slightly smaller proportion knowing how to submit one.
- Almost half of prisoners state they have had property lost in the prison. Only a small proportion claim to have received compensation for this.
- 85% of prisoners surveyed state cell bells are rarely answered within five minutes, either selecting 'not at all' or 'not very often'.
- There appears to be general dissatisfaction with healthcare provision, with 68% ranking it as either 'poor' or 'very poor'.



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