



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

**For the reporting period  
1 January 2024 to 31 July 2025**

**Published January 2026**



# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	5
<b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	7
5. Fair and humane treatment	11
6. Health and wellbeing	13
7. Progression and resettlement	15
<b>The work of the IMB</b>	
Board statistics	19
Applications to the IMB	19

All IMB annual reports are published on [www.imb.org.uk](http://www.imb.org.uk)

# 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 Kirkham is a category D open prison holding adult male prisoners. It is in the northwest of England, seven miles west of Preston and 12 miles east of Blackpool.

There are 29 occupied billets, providing some single occupancy living accommodation.

The operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, and efficient running of the regime) is 699<sup>1</sup>. Occupancy fluctuated during the report due to the introduction, in March 2023, of the temporary presumptive recategorisation scheme (TPRS, which allows certain prisoners who only have up to 36 months of their sentence left to serve to move into open prisons), and urgent measures to facilitate the presumptive recategorisation of prisoners from category C to category D due to capacity pressures in other prisons. Since then, the prison has experienced a variety of government schemes to release prisoners more quickly so more could be introduced. The prison has dealt well with the extra pressures these schemes has placed upon it.

There are numerous workshops on site, run by outside agencies, as well as land-based activities. Education provision is managed by the establishment and run by Novus. Courses include literacy, numeracy and lifestyle. Library provision is provided by Lancashire County Council.

Healthcare services and substance misuse services (SMS) are provided by the Practice Plus Group (PPG) who have replaced the previous providers Spectrum Community Health (Spectrum).

---

<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**

- Prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff assaults decreased during the reporting period, but generally the Board considers the prison to be a safe environment.
- A large number of prisoners have been returned to closed conditions on a regular basis.
- There continued to be a growing issue with illicit substances in the prison, despite enhanced security measures.

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

- The Board observed a slow improvement in relationships and work processes between staff and prisoners. However, the Governor has an ongoing action plan to improve this, whilst using different training methods and focus groups; the board acknowledge this will take time.
- The many versions of TPRS (12) and other government schemes have impacted the treatment of all prisoners. Kirkham has taken and continues to take the largest proportion of prisoners across the open prison estate. In the Board's view, it is only due to the committed and hard-working staff that this has been made possible. Despite their best efforts, staff continued to be left exhausted, and prisoners unsettled. The regime of this resettlement prison was disrupted due to the continued influx of prisoners with very different needs.

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

- From the Board's observations, access to healthcare for prisoners has improved during the reporting period.
- Mental health services specifically are much better due to enhanced staffing.
- Wellbeing appears to have improved because of regime changes for the gym and enrichment activities for prisoners.

##### **Progression and resettlement**

- Resettlement services were significantly impacted, often overwhelmed due to TPRS and home detention curfew (HDC). The IMB felt the prison was not supported sufficiently by the Prison Service. The Governor consistently raised concerns nationally, due to the considerable impact on prisoners and staff.
- The offender management unit (OMU) has had a significant staff restructure to overcome release on temporary license (ROTL) waiting lists and complaints.

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

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

- TPRS and early release schemes had a huge impact on HMP Kirkham having difficulty to fulfil its purpose as a resettlement prison, receiving the highest proportion of these prisoners. What additional support is planned to support the prison in managing the continued repercussions of an influx of prisoners?
- The IMB feels that to assist with the additional challenges prison staffing level should better reflect the current cohort of prisoners. Will the Minister commit to ensuring appropriate staffing levels at HMP Kirkham?

- Recent budget reductions effecting education and vocational work are not supportive to the mission of a rehabilitation and resettlement prison. Will the Minister reconsider his plans to reduce the education budget, in light of the need for rehabilitation support across the prison estate?
- The IMB believes that having additional processes that would differentiate between short, and long-term prisoners within a resettlement prison would be significantly beneficial. How does the Minister plan to address this issue?
- The IMB and the prison would welcome a Ministerial visit. Will the Minister schedule a visit in 2026?

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

- The IMB and the prison would welcome investment in in-cell technology, as recommended by the recent inspectorate report. When will the recommendation be carried out?
- The IMB believes that the prison should have more choice in deciding if prisoners are suitable to come to Kirkham. How does the Prison Service propose to work in partnership with HMP Kirkham regarding prisoner transfers?

#### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- The IMB would like to see a firmer approach to those taking drugs.
- The IMB would like to see effective action taken to prevent availability of drugs.
- The IMB is pleased to observe the continued changes in senior management team and other management areas functioning in a much more co-operative and cohesive manner.
- The IMB is pleased to see that arrangements between the employment hub and the Custody to Work programme (C2W) have developed positively.
- The IMB is pleased to see that OMU is now functioning cohesively resulting in ROTL being processed without any backlogs. Prisoners are reporting better communications and welcome the drop-in sessions.

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

<b>Issue raised</b>	<b>Response given</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Impact on TPRS.	The updated scheme allows fuller participation in the regime and addresses many of the issues inherent in the original scheme. There is now a better system for new arrivals and introduction. The safer custody department has now taken over the admissions and the induction unit, which has significantly improved prisoner interactions with staff.	Still ongoing.
Better use of the gym facilities.	Improved.	Still being monitored.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

There was a considerable churn of prisoners over the reporting period due to government actions to reduce the prison population. The maximum capacity was 699. The maximum population was 692 (99% capacity) in February 2024 and the minimum 415 (60%) in November 2024. In the nineteen months there had been 1388 receptions and 1511 discharges.

- These volumes had an inevitable effect on the effective and efficient running of the prison. The Board can report that, in its opinion, the prison coped extremely well.

Kirkham continued to receive the highest number of TPRS prisoners of the 13 open prisons. There had been a marked increase in the number of TPRS prisoners received during the first seven months of 2025 compared to the entire 2024 (640 compared to 335) and to discharges (443 against 140).

- Although staff coped well, the short sentence time remaining for many TPRS prisoners had a negative effect on resettlement elements of the prison's function.
- There continues to be an overarching concern regarding the accuracy of suitability categorisation assessments undertaken at category C prisons aiming to transfer prisoners to category D facilities. Combined with funding cuts and increases to external education course provision potentially increases the public risk exposure associated with inappropriate categorisation and category D ROTL.

#### **4.1 Reception and induction**

- The prison dealt well with large numbers of receptions, and discharges. Although receptions are planned, there are often new arrivals at short notice.
- Prisoners returned to closed conditions were 'exchanged' for suitable replacements who were brought by officer escorts. There were many instances of large discharges but with careful planning, the Board observed these went smoothly.
- New arrivals are housed in a separate billet. Although rooms are double occupancy, where possible single occupancy is maintained. New prisoner induction takes up to two weeks before joining the main camp. Orderlies, who live on the induction unit, act as mentors.
- The number returned to closed conditions deemed unsuitable for a category D prison were 246 in 2024 and 198 in 2025 up to 31 July. Of these, a total of 14 were serving life sentences and five were indeterminate sentence prisoners.

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

There had been no attempted suicides during the reporting period.

There were four instances of self-harm recorded in 2024 and a further three during the first seven months of 2025 until 31 July. None were classed as serious.

## **Deaths in custody**

There were two deaths in custody. One was in 2024, and the inquest has been scheduled. In 2025, there was a further death which occurred in hospital. An inquest is scheduled.

Neither of these cases were regarded as being self-inflicted and have been referred to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), the independent organisation that investigates deaths in custody.

## **ACCTS**

A total of 28 assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents (used to support prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide) were opened during the period.

18 open ACCTs in 2024 and 10 up to 31 July 2025, all closed successfully. Staff training is good, with four members of staff ACCT assessor trained. Safety intervention meetings (SIMs) ran weekly, a monthly tripartite meeting, jointly covered safety, security and drug strategy.

## **Listeners**

Kirkham's Listeners team is selected from volunteers in the prison population by the Blackpool branch of the Samaritans. Their function is to identify and 'listen' to prisoners who may feel more inclined to speak to fellow prisoners, rather than staff, about any concerns that they have.

Listener numbers changed constantly due to the churn of prisoners, but averaged about seven at any one time, together with a prison coordinator.

## **Buddies (Recoop)**

Recoop is a charity together with LCC, offering social support, aimed at prisoners over 50, although anyone with an identified need is included. There were six trained prisoners acting as 'buddies'. The number fluctuated due to an influx of TPRS prisoners; many had little time to serve. There were several undergoing a training programme and 10 applications to become a 'buddy'. Together with the safer custody office, 'buddies' helped to identify prisoners who need support.

## **Protected characteristics forums**

This is under the management of the equalities adviser. This initiative covers race, religion, disability, ethnicity, older and younger prisoners' discussion and support groups through forums. The ethnicity forum is popular.

## **PERS**

The pathway enhanced resettlement service (PERS) is a tiered approach to supporting HMPPS in their management of prisoners presenting with high-risk needs and screen on the offender personality disorder (OPD) pathway. PERS is for prisoners transferring to category D prisons. It is jointly commissioned by NHS England and HMPPS, delivered via a joint service model that includes NHS England health and HMPPS staff.

With five PERS services in England, Kirkham is the only PERS in the North of England. This voluntary service had capacity to support 25 prisoners who were identified earlier in their sentence or currently assessed as high risk of reoffending. They may be

deemed high risk of harm to others, with complex needs arising from pervasive psychological difficulties and meet the criteria for personality disorder.

Their transition into open conditions and safe release into the community is likely to be complicated.

- In June 2025, PERS won the category for quality improvement and service development at the national positive practice in mental health awards.
- The IMB feels that Kirkham would benefit from offering support to a larger number of complex prisoners.

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

- There were seven recorded assaults during 2024 (12 in 2023), none on officers. Eight non-serious assaults have been recorded in 2025 to date (31 July), two of which were on officers.

A challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) is a violence reduction case management model used in prisons to manage prisoners with a raised risk of violence, or those who have engaged in violent behaviour.

It is a proactive and a reactive process, involving a case manager working collaboratively with the prisoner to identify root causes of their behaviour and developing a personalised support plan to promote non-violent ways of managing needs and achieve goals. While CSIP is for a prison setting, the overall strategy also supports rehabilitation and public safety in the community after release.

In 2024, Kirkham had 130 CSIP referrals, (26 were CSIP open; six were supported outside of CSIP and 98 had no further action). In the first seven months of 2025 until 31 July, the total CSIP referrals were 39 (16 were CSIP open; four resulted in support outside of CSIP, five returned to closed conditions and 14 had no further action).

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

- There were occasions when use of force was required by officers. There were 27 instances in 2024 and 18 in the 2025 reporting period until 31 July. Analysis indicates a variety of reasons including preventing absconds and non-compliance.
- Body worn video cameras are in use and are credited by prison staff with calming and reducing potential situations.
- There were no incidents where the use of PAVA (an incapacitant spray) was required. This is only used for night incidents.
- Use of force training officers had increased from two to three with more planned in the future. Staff attend annual refresher training courses.

#### **4.5 Recovery-focused living unit**

Established in April 2025, Kirkham offers a recovery-focused unit, supporting prisoners wanting to remain free from illicit drug use, living on a unit with a strong community ethos.

In collaboration with SMS and other partner agencies, the prison is committed to providing the best opportunity for prisoners to stay substance free, focusing on rehabilitation and positive reintegration back into the community.

The unit was mixed with prisoners who have never used drugs, have used them occasionally or were fully dependent drug users. This enabled the prison to promote a supportive community with positive outcomes for prisoners and the prison.

Prisoners are provided with additional incentives to remain drug free. Those wanting to reside there must sign a compact, which included prisoners agreeing to regular compact based drug testing.

#### **4.6 Preventing illicit items**

Preventing the import and use of drugs continues to be the most difficult challenge facing the prison. Despite over 1,000 drug finds, monthly random mandatory drug testing of 5% of the population still returned a high positive rate of those tested of 40%. Although covering over 200 acres, there had been no drones reported over the prison site. Drops and items thrown over the fence are common. Prisoners returning from ROTL either from outside work or visits with family have also been found with illicit items.

Officers had raised concerns over the low number of prisoners being searched when returning. When highlighted to the Governor, the IMB was informed that more frequent searches were not possible due to staff resources and the balance of trust placed on prisoners when on ROTL and working outside of the prison.

All prisoners have been transferred from other prisons. Upon arrival and as part of the reception process, voluntary swab drug testing gives instant results. This indicates a large number of new arrivals (40%) test positive for drug use.

As a resettlement prison there is not a zero-tolerance approach to drug use. The prison approach is the provision of help and support to prisoners wishing to change their lifestyle, including voluntary and mandatory testing.

- The Board notes that those not wishing to engage with this approach are identified and returned to closed conditions.
- The Board had observed searches of prison billets by local and regional based officers, resulting from intelligence reports. Additional resources including dogs and search teams are to be allocated to reducing the inflow of illicit items into the prison.
- There had been very few finds of alcohol with the exception of December, but regular indications of consumption.

The prison and IMB believe that prisoners wanting to keep in touch with their families is the main reason for illicit mobile phones. The Board understand that it is not the Ministry of Justice policy to provide them. Despite the Inspectorate's criticism, it is not possible for the prison to implement these recommendations.

- The inspection in September 2024 and independent review of progress in July 2025 by HM Inspectorate of Prisons highlighted the absence of in-cell telephony. The Board believe that this provision would reduce the large number of illicit mobiles (731 found in 2024 and 431 to date in 2025).
- The absence of freezers in the billets means that prisoners can only purchase small amounts of meat (bacon and sausages) from their 'canteen'. This resulted in thefts of meat from the kitchens, finds of food drops and throw overs including meat and takeaways.

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

The Board observed some improvements to effective relationships and work processes between staff and prisoners. The accommodation challenges presented from the introduction of TPRS have steadily reduced.

Aging facilities increasingly require further repair to remain operational. The prison has introduced a rolling programme for to improve the billet accommodation, which is all 'self-help', with no major investment support.

The entire regime of this resettlement prison has been disrupted due to the continued large influx of short-term prisoners with very different needs, which the prison was not staffed to manage, whilst also dealing with wider budget reductions.

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

- Adequate provision of basic billet furniture has been overcome and improved from the initial issues from the TPRS population surge.
- A refurbishment programme of billet shower rooms has commenced. Overall billet conditions have a significant variation of age and conditions.
- Historical temporary billet accommodation showing signs of age and have no long-term replacement plan.
- Lack of heating and hot water for long durations during winter continued to be a significant issue, creating damp living and working conditions for prisoners and staff awaiting protracted repair by AMEY maintenance contractors, despite being under the focus of special measures.
- No evidence of strategic spares management by contractor to prevent reoccurrence of prolonged heating and hot water issues.
- Aging facilities have continued to receive significant damage to roofs, with staff working hard to relocate and minimise closures.
- Temporary closure and relocation of staff and services for rodent control, within aging facilities, has continued to reoccur.
- Each billet has a phone in a communal area; prisoners are unable to have confidential conversations with friends and family. Prisoners often report frustration and refer to having access at other previous establishments to in-cell telephony.
- An excellent new gym has recently been built; additional staffing has enabled initial challenges for providing suitable scheduling and availability to be overcome and evening utilisation has been increased.

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

- Ineffective relationships and work processes have continued to be addressed by the leadership team, and this is gradually improving. There has been a noted increase in enrichment activities, which has enabled a closer engagement between prisoners and staff. The IMB acknowledge this takes time.

### **5.3 Faith and pastoral support**

- Excellent work has been undertaken within the chaplaincy to share multi faith awareness and support in difficult times.
- Staff continue to receive positive feedback from prisoners across all faiths for professionalism, showing sensitivity, respect and understanding during personal family situations.

- The prison equality advisor position, vacant at the moment, has been raised from part time to a full-time position and is likely to be filled shortly. The Board note the positive position taken by the prison in this function.

#### **5.4 Complaints**

- Significant improvement had been made to the complaints tracking system and management of responses resulting in faster responses to prisoners, status updates and reduction/greater efficiency of IMB oversight.
- Complaints of a discrimination nature are dealt with separately. The Board notes that the prison takes these matters seriously and that the way these complaints were dealt with was regarded as best practice in the recent Prison Inspectorate report.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

- The healthcare provider changed in April 2024 to Practice Plus Group (PPG); early anxieties have proved unfounded: the service has improved due to staffing profiles being changed to reflect the needs of the current cohort of prisoners.
- Increase in population and external medical needs requiring additional escorting duties during peaks has resulted in external medical appointments being prioritised and limited, in addition to a reduction of internal prisoner activities.
- Quarterly healthcare meeting continued between the Governor, NHS England and representatives of the services provided including social care, prompting good, joint working.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

- Waiting times for healthcare appointments have improved.
- 'Did not attends' continued to be an issue, e.g. the average dental hours lost per month was 12.
- The increased staffing for accompanied hospital visits had resulted in no cancelled hospital visits in the last quarter; an issue highlighted in last year's report.
- The appointment of a patient engagement lead resulted in many initiatives monthly. These were via drop in events in the gym, library, visits, and weekly clinics. In addition to adverts in newsletters on topics such as bowel cancer, substance misuse and mental health awareness. This had been driven by prisoner feedback surveys and supported by peer mentors.

### **6.3 Mental health**

- Mental Health staffing has been increased in size leading to a team very responsive to the prisoner's mental health needs especially for initial assessment.
- In the Board's opinion, wait times for referrals to psychological wellbeing practitioners are too long.

### **6.4 Social care**

- Social care provision by LCC is very responsive and reacted swiftly to the need for personal care plans, adaptations, palliative care, and physiotherapy. In addition, a social worker attended the Buddy meetings within the prison.
- POPS (partners of prisoners support) run visits; they had a successful joint course on relationships with LCC social workers, which was well supported and valued by prisoners and their families.

### **6.5 Regime**

- The lack of enrichment and purposeful activity highlighted by the HMIP report has resulted in significant improvements. A manager for the new gym has been appointed at a custodial manager (CM) level. This together with reduced redeployment of other gym officers has resulted in the excellent facilities being used more extensively and with an enlarged programme of activities such as free running, football, and touch rugby organised, in addition to weekend gym sessions.

- A wide range of other activities from snooker, darts, cycle rides, and beach litter picking to crafts, model car racing, painting, and cooking are now available regularly for the prisoners.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

The substance misuse service (SMS) provided by PPG, uses mainly one to one sessions; however, the 12-step online programme, Breaking Free, is also utilised. Methadone and Buvidal drug substitutes are used in the prison. Buvidal, being a weekly rather than a daily medication, is particularly useful for prisoners working outside the prison and on ROTL. SMS initiatives include a breakfast club, weekend drop-in sessions and a cognitive behavioural therapy group offered meditation, art, and mindfulness.

Specific gym sessions are held for prisoners registered with SMS, with orderlies trained on steroid awareness. The SMS peer mentors are a key component of delivering holistic wellbeing.

Sessions of Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous are available in the prison (and the outside community for ROTL ready prisoners). Links are maintained with outside agencies such as Reconnect and Out Spoken to support prisoners on release, in addition to medical referrals for those requiring medication.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

- The library continues to be well staffed and stocked, remaining popular. Improvements included e-learning and online access to DVLA and construction courses. It served as a drop-in centre for healthcare and hosts mindfulness sessions.
- Storybook Dads, where prisoners record themselves reading a story for their children on a CD or DVD, remains popular. An innovation this year has been Raising Reading, where dads and their children read the same books and discuss over the phone.
- Education initiatives such as mid-life MOT, savings and life ambition and 'progress to work' continued to be led by an orderly programme, with steady implementation.
- All NOVUS courses are quality assured by the learning and skills manager and the hub manager, which was recognised by OFSTED in a recent inspection.
- Good relationships continue with local higher education providers, mainly UCLAN (IT) Preston College, Blackpool and Fylde College (construction) and Myerscough College (horticulture). At the Board's prompting, L3 Electrical courses are now provided at Preston and Blackpool; in addition, some prisoners are engaged in Open University courses.
- Courses in IT and the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (sometimes required for work on a construction site) continue to be heavily subscribed.
- The close cooperation with Shannon Trust charity continues to benefit prisoners with reading difficulties.
- Staffing issues around IT provision were rectified. There is concern that a budget reduction for education and vocational courses will lead to staff redundancies and a deterioration in provision.
- Education enrichment sessions were held throughout the week, involving a variety of activities including chess, art and craft, cookery, meditation and yoga.
- A 'progress in work' document, which includes targets, regular reviews and feedback, continues to play a useful role in a prisoner's rehabilitation.
- Education induction sessions are held weekly. The reluctance of TPRS prisoners to engage continued to be a challenge and had a detrimental impact on attendance figures.

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

- Relationships with local colleges, especially concerning construction courses, including a 'Build Up' course that offered taster sessions in different trades, continued to be popular.
- There had been a significant overhaul of the management and location of custody to work (C2W) team. The team is now located in the employment hub under the line management of the prison employment lead (PEL). It is being run by non-operational staff trained in security and health and safety issues.
- With the recent number of releases (SDS40 HDC12), numbers accessing C2W had dwindled but were slowly building back up. It had been possible, through the efforts of the team, to maintain a list of employers willing to engage.
- After a pause on self-sourced jobs, this was lifted subject to rigorous security checks but has not proved as effective as previously.
- There had been positive recognition of external organisations supporting prisoner ROTL employment. The grocery chain Booths have provided over 30

job offers to prisoners. Greene King and Wider Timbers also provided opportunities, including post release.

- Recycling Lives became increasingly popular, opening a second workshop. Prisoners continued to work out at the Recycling Lives Preston branch. The residential officer visited occasionally to interview prisoners seeking accommodation on release.
- The new Construction Academy had been highly effective in co-locating bricklaying and plastering in one larger building adjacent to Timbers and painting and decorating.
- City & Guilds vocational courses were available in plastering, bricklaying, barbering (now no longer available) waste management and painting and decorating. All popular, prisoners were able to progress at their pace and receive support on the written elements.
- The Timbers workshop provide experience and qualifications in using modern machinery and stock handling, warehousing and forklift truck driving, it met demands from other prisons for providing in-cell furniture.
- The establishment of a 'Q Branch', which undertakes minor repairs around the prison, enables prisoners to gain experience in a range of activities, with relevant qualifications and extend its numbers and premises to keep up with demand.
- A Railtrack course proved popular. A number have received their 'tickets' for work on release. Forklift truck training is over subscribed.
- It was difficult to allocate work/education and motivate TPRS prisoners, due to their short stay prior to release. A determined cohort consistently refused to work, despite attempts by the prison to engage with them. This had a detrimental effect on longer-serving prisoners. In education, this led to a deterioration in the numbers of prisoners attending.
- The co-location of the various elements of construction with their own specialist tutors increased the popularity and was welcomed by prisoners.
- Due to reductions in budgets, tutors will be made redundant and replaced by a single multi-disciplinary tutor. This is a retrograde step within a prison dedicated to rehabilitation and resettlement.

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

- Regardless of improvements in C2W, opportunities for outside work had been seriously hindered by ROTL processes arising from the increased workload on the offender management unit (OMU) through TPRS. It is pleasing to note that discussions have been held between the OMU and C2W improving procedures.
- The appointment of two senior probation officers was crucial in progressing offender management, but both resigned within the reporting period.
- Most staffing issues have been largely addressed. HMIP recognised there had been some serious deficiencies in processes leading to significant discontent (see number of applications below). This led to changes with up to five staff working on ROTL Boards, which have now reverted back to a paper version.
- It is impossible to overstate the negative impact TPRS had on the OMU, which lead to increased and ever-changing workload. This is clearly to the detriment of their important work in other areas of the prison, particularly the processing of ROTL Boards.
- Similarly, this constant churn, equivalent to four prison populations (emptied twice and filled twice during period) together with the introduction of SDS40 and HDC12 has again diverted staff from their regular responsibilities. Despite

excellent staff efforts and excessive numbers, the short turnaround of prisoners remains challenging to deliver, particularly in terms of sentence calculation.

- It was clear some staff and prisoners were suffering with mental health related issues during this period, having a detrimental effect on this vital area of the prison.
- Not only have processes been refined but so have channels of information, with prisoners given regular updates on their applications through one to one meetings, ROTL clinics and drop-in sessions.
- Parole board hearings were held periodically. The OMU prepared prisoners carefully for the process, so they can demonstrate not only progression but also readiness for parole.
- Risk-management meetings were held when needed, the prison made every effort to retain prisoners. For some, a return to closed conditions is unavoidable.
- There is a vibrant veterans group. A support network helped veterans prepare for resettlement, with regular contact with the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA), Care after Combat, Vets HQ and PTSD Resolutions, plus other agencies.
- During 2024, four veterans were transferred and 24 released. At 31 July 2025, there were 12 veterans in the establishment. There were eight prison transfers and 24 released so far in 2025.
- Through this network group, the prison can help prisoners get work, training and housing and provide funding to help their families if they have difficulties. These included: clothing, driving medicals, employment, veterans' ID card and veterans' rail card.
- The veterans lead manager can be given permission to act on their behalf regarding contacting any of the external military forces support network, such as those above.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

- Thursday social visits have proved popular and frequently approaches the maximum of 46 visits, the same numbers as Saturday and Sunday.
- Family days, which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits (usually in more informal settings) were held monthly. Additional days were also held to support specific groups.
- Two 'significant other' days were held for prisoners not wanting visits. These took place at a local church, organised by Partners of Prisoners (POPS) and the Mothers' Union. There was a talk on local history, followed by a churchyard tour of interesting graves. There were opportunities for prisoners to socialise with the local people, and included a quiz and a visit to a local supermarket.
- Two 'couples' days' were held in the visits' for prisoners with partners or adult relatives. Activities such as flower arranging and cake decorating were organised, in addition to lunch and refreshments.
- A prisoner on an ACCT wanting a family visit did not have the funds. POPS facilitated the visit to take place. They arranged accommodation for the family of a prisoner who were having to 'sofa surf'.
- Christmas events were particularly special and emotional with a visit from father Christmas and presents for the children.

#### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

A significant number of TPRS prisoners are arriving at Kirkham with a minimal amount

of resettlement planning in their former prisons. Many have no address, little prospect of employment and passing relationships with external agencies, including the probation services.

- All employment agencies (information advice and guidance/IAG, Jobcentre Plus/JCP, Achieve Northwest/ANW and New Futures/NF) are now accommodated in one hub, allowing more collegiate working. Recently C2W has been similarly accommodated, which is a significant improvement.
- Jobcentre Plus identifies vacancies and IAG job matches with serving prisoners.
- There are good examples of joint working with the employment lead, Jobcentre Plus and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) looking to secure real opportunities for sustainable employment post release. DWP provided additional assistance to ensure prisoners had access to funds within 24 hours of release.
- Given the limited time scales for TPRS prisoners, employment interviews are having to be held post release in job centres.
- Both DWP and Job Centre Plus are providing assistance in interviewing and CV writing.
- Employment boards are held weekly.
- A highly successful jobs fair was held, with 82 prisoners attending and 17 companies.
- A team of dedicated staff are now dealing with the setting up of bank accounts and securing ID documents and driving licenses as well as other support services.
- C2W saw a significant improvement. It has now been co-located with the other agencies within the employment hub. It is now staffed with non-operational staff who have been trained in security issues.
- Concerns have arisen around the issues of accommodation on release. Previously the prison had its own accommodation officer. This had been removed and although the prison made every effort to ensure that no prisoner was released with no fixed abode (NFA), this was not always guaranteed.
- A leaflet for prisoners with housing concerns had been developed and is distributed by the employment hub. It also forms part of the DWP induction sessions.
- The influx of TPRS prisoners has exacerbated this issue, with many unwilling to engage and often come from areas distant from Kirkham, where resolution is more problematic.

## 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	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6
Total number of visits to the establishment	262

### Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	4
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	2	3
C	Equality	0	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	2	3
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	0	0
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	2
F	Food and kitchens	0	4
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	8	12
H1	Property within the establishment	0	1
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	0	5
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	0	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	1	36
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	1	0
K	Transfers	0	1
L	Miscellaneous	3	1
<b>Total number of applications</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>72</b>



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [imb@justice.gov.uk](mailto:imb@justice.gov.uk)