



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI New Hall

**For reporting year
1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	7
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	9
5. Fair and humane treatment	13
6. Health and wellbeing	19
7. Progression and resettlement	21
 The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	26
Applications to the IMB	26

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI New Hall is a closed prison and young offenders' institution for women aged 18 and over, situated between Huddersfield and Wakefield in West Yorkshire. The prison is in a rural setting close to the M1 and M62 and is served by regular bus services from Huddersfield and Wakefield. Visitors using public transport have a walk of approximately one mile to the prison gates. Prisoners are drawn mainly from the north of England, although currently there are also prisoners from further south, which means that significant problems are faced by families and friends who want to visit and issues for prisoners in terms of resettlement at the end of their sentences. The prison only receives prisoners from further south for exceptional reasons and offer them video visits.

Living accommodation

HMP/YOI New Hall has an operational 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 up to 376¹ prisoners from the age of 18 years, including up to 40 with life sentences and imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners and indeterminate sentence prisoners (ISP). There are three main residential units: Oak, Willow, and Poplar. Most of the accommodation is single occupancy although there are still some cells with double occupancy. There is a dedicated first night centre located in Poplar and a small mother and baby unit in Maple House, which can accommodate up to nine mothers and their babies. Holly House accommodates prisoners who present with symptoms of serious mental health conditions and who require care and assessment. Sycamore House is used for prisoners who require care and separation (segregation). Rivendell is partly used for the OPD pathway service, supporting women who present with personality difficulties.

Providers of main services:

- Mental health service: Practice Plus Group (formerly Care UK)
- Drug treatment: Inclusion Services
- Education: Novus
- CIAG: Acorn
- Library: Novus
- Healthcare: Practice Plus Group (formerly Care UK)
- Provider of the main psychological service to the whole prison: WEPS
- Counselling and advocacy; accommodation; rape and sexual trauma service; domestic violence support: Together Women Project
- Family and relationships service provider: PACT
- Probation: Pre-release team and departure lounge

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

IMB prisoner survey May 2024

In May 2024, the IMB conducted a survey of prisoners. Out of a total of 322 prisoners, there were 240 responses to survey which represents 75 percentage of the prison's population, and covered the reporting period.

Physical environment - prisoners were asked about their physical environment including whether there were dignity screens (167 said 'yes'), cell curtains (197 said 'yes'), opening windows (224 said 'yes') and to rate their wing showers (majority 'good'/'very good', 33 'very bad'). The small number of negative responses can be explained by one wing where the showers are scheduled for refurbishment. Rota visits include regular checks on the state of the showers.

Food - over 40% gave a 'neutral' response to the food (105), but 70 said it was 'bad' or 'very bad'. 141 said the canteen range of goods did not meet their needs.

Exercise – 65 prisoners said they never went outside to exercise. Others, between one and five times per week, with 72 managing 5 times. 129 never use the gym but 79 said they used it one to two times a week and 36 responded three-four times per week. The gym was recognised as having a good range of activities (169).

Library (education) - the majority (153) of respondents used the library at least one to two times per week and thought there was a good range of materials. 82 said they had a personal learning plan (PLP), while 158 answered no to this question.

169 prisoners had been able to speak to a Listener (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) when they wanted.

Religious beliefs – 124 responded that they felt their beliefs were respected, but 39 felt they were not.

Communication – no prisoner identified problems receiving or sending mail (letters or parcels) or accessing telephones. Support to maintain contact with family and friends had a mixed response (117 'yes' and 95 'no'). Not all respondents were clear about who their prison offender manager was (162 'yes', 78 'no').

Property – 133 reported their property arriving at the same time, but 107 said that was not their experience.

Induction course - mixed responses, with only 72 answering positively, 47 did not remember a course.

IMB – 155 had heard of the IMB but 145 reported no applications (forms for prisoners' written representations to the IMB) on their wing and 65 had dealt with the IMB.

Use of force – 27 respondents had been physically restrained by staff.

Individual comments

Many of the individual written responses were about healthcare. Many were complaints about medication delays, but also poor treatment: one prisoner commented that she had been left without treatment for a broken ankle for 48 hours. There are some negative comments about the attitude of healthcare staff and several comment on the delays in receiving their medication. There is a positive

comment about the IMB's successful interventions and another suggesting 'that healthcare needs sorting out'. There are two comments about mental health conditions, e.g. bipolar and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) not being taken seriously and general reflections that the staff come across as being unhelpful and unsympathetic during interactions with women with a history of trauma. In one response, the staff are referred to as 'cold and not approachable'. The poor handling of transgender issues is flagged by another prisoner.

Comments about the regime included a lack of time 'out of cells' to eat, shower and exercise, and resentment about early lockups. The temperature problem in wings with old heating systems which are either on or off. There are comments about being 'frozen' at times. There is a request for more privileges for enhanced status prisoners (the highest level of privileges in the incentives scheme, a system of earned privileges to incentivise positive behaviour), with a request that everyone has more time out of cell in the evening.

Some respondents said that there should be more variety in the food available and there was an individual observation that many women put on weight when they are in New Hall. There was another comment thought the food portions were too small.

There was an objection to being in a double cell but also a willingness to improve their environment by painting cells, etc.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Education and progression

- Very low levels of education (particularly Literacy) have been identified by the prison team and programmes developed. Library services continue to be developed. The majority are Entry 3 English and Level 1 English.
- The IMB recommends that more purposeful activity is timetabled for prisoners if/when contractual sewing work is not available. The employment pathways are being developed and will support progression in number of ways.

Safety: reception and induction

- Two-hourly wellbeing checks are conducted during the first 72 hours in custody.
- Plans to introduce a new body scanner (to prevent illicit items brought into prison) are well advanced.
- Good practice has been identified by the Early Learning Review (conducted by the regional safety team) and remedial action taken where identified.
- New Hall was a pilot for the HOPE initiative in 2021/22, which is a brief, psychologically informed intervention that has been supported for roll out by the women's estate self-harm task force. The early days service (TEDS), which HOPE is now a part of, is well established.

Health and wellbeing

- The reporting year saw the introduction and continued development of the drug recovery wing.
- There was a 50% increase in the number of applications to the IMB relating to healthcare, mainly about prescribing.
- The Board is concerned about women with serious and complex mental health needs (see areas for development).
- A mental health practitioner was recruited, with a positive impact, and a women's health hub is being developed but is not yet operational.

Fair and humane treatment

- As part of TEDS, HOPE provides the group based psychological intervention in specific areas, including reception and the first night centre.
- There have been continuing efforts to improve support services including a
- local collaboration between the Listener service and Samaritans.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Changes to the sentencing guidelines have put additional pressures on the OMU staff. How does the Minister plan to mitigate the pressure?
- The changes to the Mental Health Act mean that acutely mentally unwell prisoners cannot easily access appropriate mental health services once they are admitted to prison. Changing this would help to accelerate the process of prisoners to secure units (see 2023/24 annual report).
- The ability to use the body scanner as soon as possible would help prison security. When does the Minister plan to implement body scanning?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- As highlighted in our 2023/24 annual report, increased levels of funding are essential to meet the complex and severe mental health needs of the women. The Board wishes to reiterate its concerns about the number of women with severe mental health condition who are being sent to the prison solely as a place of safety. We feel that prison is not an appropriate environment for women with severe mental health issues and those women requiring assessment and admission to secure mental health establishments were not assessed and transferred promptly enough. How does the Prison Service plan to address this issue?
- It is recommended that data, specific to New Hall, regarding reoffending rates are gathered and monitored by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HMP New Hall.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Maintenance of equipment, e.g. washing machines / tumble dryers and basic furnishings, such as carpets stuck together with gaffer tape, take a long time to repair (first night centre and Oak 2).
- Moving forward there is concern about national policy which will cut the education and skills funding and possibly reduce access to education in the future. How will this be addressed in the prison?
- The continued development of appropriate support for vulnerable prisoners on release.
- Continued strategies to address the increase in number of complaints about the healthcare provision, e.g. plans for the women's health hub and Practice Plus Group monitoring of health care centre concerns and complaints.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

When the Board has observed the reception process, they found it to be professionally managed, efficient, and working well. Staff were thorough and clear when explaining the process to prisoners. The reception area was consistently clean and tidy with a calm atmosphere, providing a secure and welcoming environment for women arriving at the prison.

All women that arrive at New Hall are processed through reception upon arrival. All new prisoners are seen by healthcare to ensure that any urgent medical needs, medications, or prescriptions can be addressed. Part of this process also includes testing a urine sample to establish if they have recently taken any illicit substances and what those substances may be, as well as taking a pregnancy test. All pregnancy tests taken are followed up with a second test after three weeks of arriving at New Hall.

One of the key parts of the reception process is identifying any risks and vulnerabilities. Early days in custody is proven to be a vulnerable time for people coming into prison, so it is key that any risks or vulnerabilities are identified, and the appropriate support is put in place at the earliest opportunity.

This is done through the initial reception interview, conducted by the reception officer. They ask questions to establish any risk related and individual needs information and whether they meet the criteria for enhanced early days support through the women's estate psychology service.

The interview also ensures that women can contact family upon arrival, as well as explaining to them the communications, residential wing rules, and incentives scheme compacts for them to sign. All prisoners arriving at New Hall, also have a cell share risk assessment conducted. This is to ensure that the person is not of risk to others, should they be required to share a cell with another prisoner.

Everyone who arrives at New Hall is offered a hot meal, hot drink, and a shower in reception. Women are also able to purchase a vape pack or a sweet pack. Where the person does not have the money to purchase these items, an advance from finance is facilitated. This bridges the gap between entering the prison and being able to purchase them through the normal prison process. All women are also offered seven pairs of underwear and socks when they arrive, as well as prison tracksuits, nightwear, towels, and toiletries.

Prisoners arriving at New Hall remain on the first night centre (FNC) wing for 14 days before being moved to one of the other wings in the prison.

A healthcare check of all prisoners is completed by the prison healthcare team on a prisoner's eighth day in the prison. This to ensure a prisoner is medically fit to move to another location in the prison after 14 days. This period may be extended if healthcare feel that they would benefit from remaining on the FNC for a longer period.

HOPE, part of the TED programme, is extremely well-received with new prisoners during their early days in New Hall. The programme is a brief psychologically informed intervention funded through SR money. Feedback from the women attending the programme is consistently incredibly positive.

The 'my experience' document is being used to enable the prison to target resources more effectively to meet the needs of more women. This is enabling the prison to get a better understanding of the women in the establishment and to encourage and forge effective communication at all levels, helping to support the women to cope more effectively whilst in prison.

There is also a peer mentor scheme in the prison to support new prisoners during their stay in New Hall. A peer mentor meets with the prisoners to go through relevant information about the prison and to offer their support, this support is immediately accessible to the prisoner and continues throughout their stay in prison. This is proving to be especially beneficial to first time prisoners.

The IMB prisoner survey in 2024 found that not all respondents' property arrived with them at New Hall (133 responded 'yes' and 107 'no'). However, during the reporting period, the Board only received three applications relating to property lost during transfer in from another establishment. This apparent disparity will be monitored over the current reporting period.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There were two deaths during the reporting period. One former prisoner died within 28 days of release. As this death was so soon after their release, it was investigated in line with deaths in custody.

The Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) conducted investigations into both deaths, and they are also the subject of an ongoing investigation by the coroner.

The PPO review of the community death was concluded, with findings that the correct processes were followed to manage the risk associated with substance misuse by the prison and Probation Service.

The PPO review into the death in custody found several good practice elements, with only one minor recommendation. This was a palliative care case and the findings around the level of care were positive.

There were 1162 self-harm incidents by 119 individuals over the reporting year. This is an increase of 130 from the previous year's total of 1032. Many are individuals who self-harmed frequently (defined as five or more incidents per month). The highest seven individuals who self-harmed frequently are responsible for 682 incidents.

A total of 343 assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents (ACCTs) were opened over the year. This is a care planning process and support system for prisoners who are at risk of suicide and self-harm, aiming to ensure their safety through co-ordinated staff actions and a personalised care plan. This is a decrease of 108 from the previous year.

The Listener service continues to improve with support from the local Samaritans and a 24-hour service is now well established. New Hall has a good relationship with

the local branch of the Samaritans who regularly visit the prison to provide support and training for the Listeners.

Of the prisoners surveyed by the IMB in 2024, the majority (169) said they could speak to Listeners any time that they needed to.

The key worker implementation continues to provide an additional means of support, enabling issues to be resolved more quickly.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

During the reporting year there were 79 prisoner-on-staff assaults, eight of which were considered serious. This is a decrease of 31 from the previous year.

During the same period there were 138 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and fights, 11 of which were classed as serious. This is an increase of five from the previous year.

4.4 Use of force

There were 384 use of force incidents during the year. This is a significant decrease on the previous year of 470 (19%).

Guided holds (the lowest level of physical restraint) are the most used method where use of force is administered and was primarily used to prevent self-harm or escalation.

All use of force incidents are discussed at a weekly control and restraint (C and R) development meeting and subsequently at regular use of force meetings.

Of the prisoners surveyed by the IMB in 2024, the majority (213) said they had not been restrained by staff in the preceding six months.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The prison is continuing to ensure effective methods are being used to reduce the supply of illicit substances.

Drug supply is addressed by the routine review of intelligence gathered and processed via the regional intelligence hub. It was observed that intelligence is used in a timely manner to support the use of target area, cell, and prisoner searches as required.

The prison has a well-established working agreement with regional resources, Yorkshire area search team and dedicated search team. Both groups regularly attend the establishment and support visits, prisoner searching and staff searching.

The prison has a baggage x-ray machine for the prisoner reception area and drug testing equipment.

Plans to introduce a new X-ray body scanner in reception are well advanced. This will be the first time equipment of this kind is used in the women's estate. The X-ray body scanner may be used where there is intelligence or a suspicion that an item is internally concealed, and would be carried out following a rub-down search. A full search may still take place if it is believed that an item is concealed externally, either on the body or in clothing.

The equipment has been delivered, and an implementation plan is being drawn up to develop protocols, staff training etc. It is hoped that the equipment will be brought into use later this year.

4.6 Drug recovery wing and incentivised substance free living

Throughout the last 12 months the drug recovery wing (DRW) team has continued to review and develop its 16-week drug recovery programme to ensure maximum effectiveness. The programme is open to incorporating external sources of support and has successfully utilised support from lived experience speakers and community-based drug services.

In addition to this, the unit has improved incentives on the unit, such as providing: a food preparation room, an overhead projector to watch films and increased access to books in the wing library.

To help celebrate the success of prisoners who have completed the programme, a DRW graduation event is held every four to five months. The graduation event is open to friends and family of the DRW prisoners, and refreshments are provided.

The graduation event provides a stage for prisoners who have completed and are still completing the programme to celebrate and highlight the progress they have made on their journey to recovery.

Over the last 12 months, three of these events have been held to celebrate a total of 28 prisoners completing the programme.

New Hall's incentivised substance free living (ISFL) unit has continued to increase in popularity. The unit has become more appealing to prisoners due to it being a more settled unit, underpinned by a drug free culture. This kind of environment is necessary to support prisoners who want to focus on their recovery.

5. Fair and Humane Treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing and food

New Hall's cellular living accommodation is varied and while the older built areas support smaller groups of prisoners (34 per unit), the more recently built larger wings offer a larger space and can cater for between 58 and 76 prisoners. Most prisoners are accommodated in single occupancy cells, with washbasins and a toilet. Modesty curtains assist in maintaining dignity.

The built environment is used to manage prisoners who benefit from differing types of living area. Some prisoners benefit from living on a smaller unit in preference to a larger and more open unit, which could create an enhanced level of anxiety. Ongoing upgrades range from a complete refurbishment of floors, walls and equipment to the replacement of plumbing and drainage. Further progress has been made in this area over the last year and a generally decent environment is evident across the site. The Rivendell unit offers accommodation with in-cell showers, and a bath is available on Holly House, and Willow. The regime specifically identifies opportunities for all prisoners to access showers daily in normal operational circumstances.

The 2024 IMB prisoner survey comments about the regime included a lack of time 'out of cells' to eat, shower and exercise, and resentment about early lockups. The temperature is still a problem on wings with old heating systems, which are either on or off. There are comments about being 'frozen' at times. There is a request for more privileges for enhanced status prisoners, with a request that everyone has more time out of cell in the evening.

The first night centre ensures that all prisoner's needs are met at the earliest opportunity. The drug recovery wing located on Oak. This bespoke unit provides a therapeutic community environment to support and encourage women through their recovery journey.

Cell furnishings and maintenance are generally good, with a focus upon the reduction and removal of graffiti. A 'display of offensive materials policy' is applied consistently and applies to all areas of the establishment, including prisoner, visitor and staff areas. Prisoners are allowed to wear their own clothing, and a charity shop (St George's Crypt, a charity for the homeless) is available for prisoners to purchase clothing at nominal prices. Prisoners who need clothing, either upon reception or as a result of changes during their time at the prison, can also access clothing via reception, ensuring that dignity is upheld at all times. Prisoners have weekly access to laundry facilities, where personal clothing can be laundered and bedding washed. Prison bedding and towels are exchanged weekly.

Dietary information is provided on all menus (meeting legislative requirements), and all dietary requirements are catered for appropriately as indicated by health and faith considerations. The catering manager is currently looking at providing a wider range of healthier and nutritionally balanced meals, and has introduced 12 'Buddha bowls', which are all plant based but provide enough protein and the recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals. The kitchens offer a five-choice daily menu in a four-week rolling menu, offering varied pre-selected choices. The kitchens continue to offer a vegan choice as part of this offering. This is suitable for many religious and dietary requirements. There is always a halal option, and other diets are catered for

on a bespoke basis. In the Board's opinion, they have gone above and beyond to cater for religious festivals and family days. The catering department employs up to 25 prisoners within the function to assist in the provision of the meals. The kitchen manager or a member of their team, who regularly visit to observe the serving of meals, monitors portion control. Wing HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control point, which refers to procedures put in place to ensure the food production is safe) has been recently established and there is training for prisoners who work on the serveries. This has included food safety, as well as the importance of avoiding cross contamination for vegan, halal and non-halal items. The IMB regularly observes and reports on the work of the kitchen, the tasting and distribution of food plus the distribution areas on the wings.

In the IMB survey, prisoners commented on a preference for greater variety in the food available and an individual observed that many women put on weight when they are in New Hall, but another commented on the small sizes of the portions.

5.2 Segregation

IMB members always visit segregation whilst on the weekly rota and the aim is to as much as possible attend adjudications (disciplinary hearing when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) and reviews. The IMB also speaks with new prisoners to check that they have received a healthcare visit and understand why they are there.

The segregation unit has 12 cells currently available. The characteristics of prisoners located on the unit are carefully monitored in support of delivering a demonstrably equitable regime to prisoners of all types and individual needs.

The segregation team complete decency checks on a monthly basis and report minor repairs to the works team. This includes the removal of graffiti. Bespoke furniture has been fitted in a segregation unit cell to be damage-proof and robust.

The segregation team is a small team of officers and a custodial manager (CM). Officers attend adjudications and provide advice and guidance in their role as adjudication liaison officer. The CM, when available, attends segregation reviews (and this ties in with any ACCT reviews or challenge, support and intervention plan reviews – CSIP- used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence) and acts as case manager to prisoners who are to be segregated for a period of 30 days or longer.

The head of residence or duty governor chairs ACCT reviews and segregation reviews in line with policy. Any prisoner staying on segregation for longer than 42 days must have the relevant approval for continued segregation form completed and sent to the Prison Group Director's office for ratification. These cases remain rare locally.

Prisoners are observed on an hourly basis, unless subject to an open ACCT (when observations may be directed to be completed on a more frequent basis), or if the manager deems it necessary for a prisoner to be observed more frequently.

During the Board's observations, prisoners are always encouraged to make their own contributions to their adjudications or segregation reviews and are routinely supported by a reintegration plan, which provides structure to their time on the

unit from the outset. In some cases, this includes continued access to the wider regime from the segregation unit, in support of individual sentence plans or wellbeing activities.

Staff in the unit liaise regularly with colleagues who can provide a range of distraction materials such as jigsaw puzzles, writing materials and a variety of art supplies. The unit maintains a range of donated books for the use of prisoners and are supported by the wider prison library. Each prisoner is offered a daily shower and a period of exercise.

Work on the unit can be stressful and demanding of staff. The unit custodial manager offers line management support to staff. Managers to staff in the unit disseminate the content of team briefings and other meetings within the prison. Team meetings are a logistical problem given the small team numbers, but the CM endeavours to keep everyone informed about issues in the wider prison environment, through email and the use of the unit observation book. Staff members have access to other forms of support as required (trauma risk management, TRiM, a trauma-focussed peer support system and PAM Assist, the employee assistance provider) and staff are encouraged to make use of these services when needed.

The use of the digital prison service adjudication system has been introduced (the first to roll out in the women's estate) and is now well embedded. A community pay-back scheme has been introduced for prisoners who are willing to engage with the establishment in paying back debts that they have incurred by paying for damages through work. There are newly introduced risk assessments to allow prisoners to engage with their peers while in segregation. This has been reported to be working well and reduces the isolation experienced in segregation.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The relationships between staff and prisoners have been observed by the Board to be very good. Information is shared with prisoners about changes to the regime, as well as opportunities for engagement and news. The in-cell technology facility is recognised as a major contribution all aspects of communication within the prison, and its full potential is still being realised and developed. The key worker system is established and is very successful at New Hall.

A key worker support guide is a directory to support key workers in understanding the prisoner's journey, the interventions available and points of contact. This document was introduced in May 2024.

5.4 Equality and diversity

As of the end of February 2025 the prisoner population of HMP New

Hall comprised the following:

A total of 313 prisoners and five babies:

Age ranges	
18-21	9
22-29	60
30-39	108
40-49	97
50-59	35
60-69	1
70 +	3

Ethnic groupings	
White British (W1)	250
Mixed (M1, M2, M9)	13
Asian or Asian black (A1, A2, A9)	11
Black or black British (B1, B2, B9)	14
Gypsy or Irish traveller (W3)	3
Irish (W2) and white other (W9)	22

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

There is a bespoke chaplaincy centre, which provides faith and pastoral support for all prisoners. In the prisoner survey, it was commented that most prisoners felt their beliefs were respected by the prison. Chaplaincy provides faith provision in the form of corporate worship and study for all prisoners. The chaplaincy team provides pastoral and bereavement support for prisoners and staff. All new prisoners are seen face-to-face within 24 hours of coming into the establishment.

Prisoners on the healthcare unit and in segregation are visited daily, and all prisoners supported by the ACCT process are seen weekly. Prisoners who are due to be released are seen approximately six weeks prior to discharge and any who are regular attendees at chapel faith services are linked to faith communities in their area where possible.

For enhanced prisoners, there is a monthly film afternoon on Sunday, complete with popcorn and juice. There is also monthly line dancing and a chill and chat session three out of four weeks a month.

Chaplaincy has a CRUSE bereavement counsellor once a week, who offers bereavement counselling and one of the chaplains is a trained domestic abuse

counsellor and works one-to-one with prisoners. Chaplaincy facilitates an accredited restorative justice programme which leads to a level 1 or 2 qualification and is based on the impact crime has on the victim and the wider community. The chaplaincy choir is a weekly activity and is open to all faiths and none. Through attendance at the choir, the Board has observed that prisoners have grown in self-confidence and at Christmas, the choir led the carol services performing nontraditional songs, sketches and poems written and read by them. The major faith festivals are celebrated in collaboration with the catering department and external agencies who donate food and gifts. The chaplaincy ensures each prisoner can celebrate their faith despite their circumstances. Members of the chaplaincy team speak at external faith and other groups to highlight the difficulties prisoners face and to encourage them to offer support on release.

5.6 Incentives schemes

In line with government requirements, New Hall operates an incentives scheme. This scheme is clarified for all new prisoners in the form of a 'compact' which they are expected to sign, and which commits them to adhere to standards of behaviour during their period of imprisonment. The different levels, from basic (the lowest level) to enhanced (the highest level), are made clear to prisoners, as is the mechanism by which they can move up and down the levels, based upon behaviour. Opportunities to reach the higher level are routinely improved by the reduction in the 'waiting period' to 28 days. This has been accompanied by increased access to tier 2 activities for enhanced prisoners; there are now clear increased facilities and a distinct difference between the three incentive levels, meaning that the principles behind the policy are upheld by a visible and genuinely improved offer for those who fully engage with risk reduction and sentence planning opportunities, while demonstrating an engaged and constructive approach to their imprisonment.

Basic level is reviewed frequently. While intentionally challenging, all foundation tier activities are always met, meaning that no one is exposed to anything less than a decent, hopeful and progressive regime, with an early return to the standard level available once expectations are met. The systems of review and appeal are clearly set out and are reasonably well understood by most prisoners. Disputes regarding the outcome of reviews, and in particular decisions to 'demote' prisoners, are sometimes brought to the attention of the IMB. Whilst the interpretation of behaviours is clearly subject to some variation between individual managers, the IMB is satisfied that the published system works well, and that each individual case is judged on its merits. Prisoners are very much encouraged to participate in the decision-making process, either verbally or in writing, or both, and the IMB has seen several examples where decisions, even when not popular, have been explained with care and sensitivity to the prisoner.

5.7 Complaints

Arrangements for the processing and subsequent auditing of complaints is well established. All complaints are centrally logged and monitored. Regular reports are submitted to the senior management team and every month, one senior management team member undertakes a quality check on at least 10% of

complaints submitted. Complaints monitoring also features as a regular item at monthly performance management meetings. At these meetings, which the IMB observes, complaints statistics are viewed, and any patterns emerging are carefully considered, and followed up as required. Particular attention is paid to complainants from prisoners who are from black, Asian or ethnic minorities, statistics about whom are compared against the wider population to monitor equality of approach. New Hall adopts a restorative justice approach to the complaints process, prisoners are now told if their complaint is upheld or partially upheld. Response times are also monitored, and the IMB is aware of evidence that the content of complaints responses are checked for quality by senior managers, who will also follow up on responses with constructive criticism or positive feedback. prisoners are aware of the complaint's procedure, and relevant documentation is readily available throughout the prison.

The total numbers of complaints have increased slightly from the previous reporting year. During April 2024 to February 2025 (inclusive), there were a total of 904 complaints. These figures included complaints from several women who made complaints that were not upheld. The nature of the complaints follows a very similar pattern to that observed in previous years. The IMB received 139 applications for the same period.

5.8 Property

The logging, storage and monitoring of personal property is well-organised at New Hall. All new arrivals are informed about the level and type of personal property they are allowed within the prison, and this process is sometimes the subject of complaint, partly because individual prisons operate their own facility lists, which are not consistent between establishments. The extent to which personal property is allegedly lost in transit between prisons is a regular cause for complaint, as mentioned earlier in this report. All new prisoners, whether new or transfers from another prison, receive the same level of support. All possessions are logged in their presence and any initial queries are dealt with at that time. There is an agreed 'facilities list' and all staff working in reception adopt this in order to ensure consistency.

Some women arrive with few possessions. From the Board's observations, they are provided with at least two sets of clothing. Women arriving in reception are encouraged to participate in the above process and are given the opportunity to ask questions. On completion of the process women are asked to sign a property card where everything regarding their property is recorded. The officer administering the procedure also signs this card. If a prisoner is moved, their property usually transfers with them. All new residents, whether new receptions or transfers from another prison, receive the same level of support.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Overview

The Prison Service, in partnership with healthcare providers, is required to ensure that the women in HMP New Hall have access to quality healthcare services. Practice Plus Group (PPG) is the leading provider of healthcare in the establishment. The healthcare needs of the women coming to New Hall continue to be increasingly complex and high level. The number of complex cases is a challenge for the service and the prison.

IMB prisoner survey 2024 responses - Many of the individual written responses for the survey were about healthcare. Many were complaints about medication delays but some also about poor treatment. There were positive comments about the IMB's successful interventions.

6.2 Prison as a place of safety

The prison continues to be used as a place of safety for people with highly complex mental health needs. This poses serious challenges to staff at the prison, which includes His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), offender management unit (OMU) and PPG. The IMB Board acknowledges that all the staff do their utmost to meet the needs of these challenging prisoners. However, the fact remains, the prison cannot provide the same level of care as a secure mental health facility, which in most cases is the most appropriate care facility for these prisoners. They are acutely unwell and require a therapeutic setting that is able to stabilise their condition with medication and/or therapeutic interventions. The Board continues to raise concerns that a prison setting is neither suitable nor adequately resourced to provide the level of treatment to meet the needs of prisoners.

Prisoners requiring external secure mental health care continue to be faced with unacceptable delays before being transferred to secure facilities. These timescales, from arrival at the prison to the transfer to a secure facility, are unacceptable and continue to negatively impact on all involved. In some instances, the impact of this has contributed to self-inflicted deaths.

There is no inpatient or dedicated mental health facility at the prison, although there is a small 12-cell wing used to care for the most vulnerable prisoners. NHS England invested additional funding in Holly House to provide a dedicated mental health practitioner for the 12 women living there. Although the funding was allocated nearly 18 months ago, the healthcare provider faced several challenges in recruiting the right candidate. However, the nurse is now well embedded and having a positive impact.

6.3 Health and wellbeing general

In the last reporting year, the Board noted an increase of 50% in applications relating to healthcare over the previous reporting period. During the reporting year the IMB received 49 healthcare related applications from prisoners, which amounts to around 36% of all applications received.

The main area of concern continues to be around prescribing (39%). Around 41% of the complaints are from prisoners with more complex and challenging issues, and a number of these complaints are submitted by a small number of prisoners.

Access to a range of primary healthcare services are not ideal. However, for some areas (dentistry and access to a GP) waiting times are satisfactory.

6.4 Healthcare developments

The healthcare team has planned future initiatives (not introduced in this reporting period) to address both general and specific health issues for the prison population. This includes a wing-based facility to allow clinical staff to visit and operate on wings. Initially, the plan is to run this service as a drop-in centre for the prisoners, allowing faster access to healthcare. This will reduce lengthy waits for appointments with prisoners having immediate one-to-one consultations.

There are also plans to develop a women's health hub on one of the wings. This will be specifically aimed at women's health and encompass a wide variety of services.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education

The purpose of education in prison is to give individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment and become assets to their communities. Prisoners must be engaged, supported and encouraged to improve their employability and life skills and build social capital to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

A head of education, skills and work post has a specialist role within the senior management team to drive a whole prison strategy around education to reduce re-offending. An education core curriculum is run on a predominantly part-time basis, offering either morning or afternoon, covering English, maths and digital skills, plus vocational courses to support work in the prison and on release. All prisoners are eligible for courses, most of which are up to six weeks in duration; however, some learners on short sentences may not have the opportunity to participate in relevant courses that best meet their needs.

Courses have generally good availability, but some waiting lists do exist and are monitored weekly in the allocations board meeting, but prisoners have reported that there is a slow system for accessing work and education, especially those jobs or courses relating to their chosen pathway (2024 IMB prisoner survey).

The employment hub provides a part 2 induction to the prison (part 1 is in education), works with prisoners to establish goals and creates a digital personal learning plan, which is reviewed at regular intervals and is used to inform allocations to work and education. All prisoners are reported to have a PLP (personal learning plan). However, in the IMB prisoner survey, carried out in 2024, 158 of the prisoners who responded stated that they did not have a PLP. This may be because PLPs are often negotiated in the first few weeks of a prisoner's arrival, when other concerns may override the attention of those responsible for creating the PLPs. It is recommended that PLPs are reviewed every two weeks with a prisoner across the first six months; however, the contract with ACORN states a review every three months as the result of staffing resources.

There were 11 Shannon Trust (a charity that helps people learn to read) trained peer mentors. One prisoner was registered on Open University courses and five were enrolled on Prison Education Trust (PET) courses.

Library

The library provides access to a wide range of books and DVDs. In addition, a schedule offers each class a library session each week. All women have access to the library on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings, and some online books and podcasts are available on their prison laptops.

Women have ready access to reading materials, with books being available in most units. They can request a book from the library via their laptop, which will be delivered/collected by the library orderly. Governors support reading with a monthly book review; these books are then purchased and available to borrow. Of prisoners surveyed by the IMB in 2024, the majority (153) of respondents used the library at least one or two times per week and thought there was a good range of materials.

Gym

The gym facilities are good, with gym sessions available each day, including weekends and two evenings a week as part of tier 2, and there is an established provision of accredited Active-IQ qualifications up to level 3 and other activities for all levels of fitness. The 2024 IMB prisoner survey reported that 129 prisoners never use the gym, but 79 use it one to two times and 36 three to four times. The gym was recognised as having a good range of activities (169).

7.2 Vocational training, work

All prisoners who were able and suitable are offered work and/or vocational training, subject to an initial assessment and in conjunction with education. The prison offers 11 separate employment pathways, which prisoners choose at induction. These pathways provide purposeful activity and skills development for the individual and can be a mix of education and work. In recent years the prison has focussed on building self-esteem and empowerment, with the creation of unaccredited provision such as Phoenix, an arts or crafting-based course, and planned for 2025, a sustainability workshop whose aim will be to upcycle furniture, in collaboration with St George's Crypt.

Gardens offer a City and Guilds level 1 horticulture qualification, as well as a varied estates role for prisoners. The education contract provides recognised cleaning, food hygiene and hairdressing qualifications, as well as customer service and mentoring, which support employment outcomes. Prisoners use these qualifications to enable them to work in kitchens and on wings, and offer services such as a haircut and wash and blow-dry. The prison has relaunched the charity shop, with support from a new collaborator, St George's Crypt.

A fully-equipped sewing workshop is deployed to train prisoners on industrial sewing machines, and the prison delivers various sewing contracts. The prisoners reported to the Board that they value this work, but the intermittent nature of contracts was frustrating. The IMB observed an occasional number of days when work was cut short and prisoners were left to fill the time with colouring sheets, nail painting and hair braiding. This was the result of raw materials being stuck in transit. The Board recommends that more purposeful activity is timetabled for prisoners if/when contractual sewing work is not available.

The Max Spielman workshop, which offered digital skills, was closed and repurposed in 2024 to meet the changing prison population. The IMB was advised by prison management that this was because the risk criteria resulted in fewer women being eligible to participate, and lack of evidence of subsequent positive employment outcomes. The facility has been replaced with a dedicated workshop (skills for success) focussing on those with less than 15 weeks left to serve, enabling them to prepare for release.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The offender management unit (OMU) staff work closely with management and community rehabilitation agencies to help prisoners progress through their sentence, working towards being released and their rehabilitation back into the community. They also work with the Together Women's team. This organisation, a commissioned rehabilitative service, provides specialised support for women with

complex needs and offers general resettlement support through staff who work in prison and have bases in the community. They work with the women before discharge and, after release, continue to offer support in gaining employment, housing, etc.

All prisoners are allocated a prison offender manager (POM) once their sentence is calculated, in either a responsible or supporting capacity. Prisoners with less than 10 months to serve are the responsibility of a community offender manager (COM). Prisoners with 10 months or more until their conditional release date are initially the responsibility of a POM. All prisoners will be supported by the pre-release team, which provides the link between the individual in prison, the COM and the commissioned rehabilitative service provider in the home area. The pre-release team assesses any immediate needs and supports pre-release planning activity throughout the sentence.

A COM is allocated eight months prior to the conditional release date, with responsibility transitioning through a structured handover meeting involving the POM, the COM and the individual. Sample checks conducted by the Board found that POMs are having contact with the prisoners in line with, or more than, the national standards. It is evident that overlapping responsibilities of workers can lead to confusion for prisoners who have several different case workers.

This was confirmed by the 2024 IMB prisoner survey, which found that not all respondents were clear about who their prison offender manager was (162 responded 'yes' and 78 'no'). Practice recommendations are that clarity of role is reinforced through consistent communication, handover meetings occur eight months prior to the conditional release date and visual aids to support these processes are developed.

7.4 Family contact

'Going into custody often causes huge disruption to the lives of offenders and their families, causing crisis in employment, housing and contact with dependants' ([Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)). Women are more likely to be held in custody further from their home due to the small size of the female estate, which can make it harder for family and friends to visit and for women to receive the appropriate support.

The prison facilitates visits and contacts with family members, recognising the importance of maintaining these relationships. Approved family members and friends can keep in touch with a prisoner during their time at New Hall via secure video calls, phone calls, email, letters and physical visits.

Pact (the Prison Advice and Care Trust) runs the family and visitors' centre; the centre is spacious and welcoming, with toys and activities for children. The Pact team also supports visitors with emotional and practical support as required. Visits are held on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 1.45pm to 4pm.

From the 2024 prisoner survey, no prisoner identified problems receiving or sending mail (letters or parcels) or accessing telephones, but support to maintain contact with family and friends had a mixed response (117 responded 'yes'; 95 'no' to the question). Frustration was expressed in the time taken to get approval, particularly

for phone PINS (the system where a prisoner must wait for a new phone number to be approved on their 'PIN' to be able to make a call).

7.5 Resettlement planning

Prison leavers are more likely to reoffend if they are not resettled into the community, for example, if they have nowhere to live, no job or other income, and have poor continuity of healthcare. Women may face specific challenges, such as limited access to educational resources, insufficient support for developing mathematical and English skills, and difficulties maintaining relationships with children and families.

Whilst the Ministry of Justice publishes statistics on reoffending rates, specific rates for women released from New Hall are not readily available/identifiable in recent official statistics. However, general statistics indicate that around 48% of women are reconvicted within a year of leaving prison, rising to 61% for those serving sentences of less than 12 months.

New Hall offers 'through-the-gate' services to support prisoners as they transition back into the community ([Home - Through the Gate](#)). During and following a prisoner's release, support should be available to help them address known barriers to successful resettlement.

The employment hub aids prisoners in the last 12 weeks of their sentence with securing ID and banking, with a planned programme of employer-led events focussing on interview techniques and potential employment opportunities. This facility works closely with Job Centre Plus, who provide support with Universal Credit and benefits applications, as well as assisting with potential barriers to employment. In 2024 the careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG) service moved into this area. New Hall has also implemented a 'departure lounge' to support women at the point of release, providing a welcoming and supportive environment.

Regardless of sentence length, each prisoner has an individual release and sentence plan. Support is sourced, where required, for any complex issues associated with offending behaviour, such as, for example, drug misuse, mental health issues and homelessness, to help prisoners progress on release and reduce any risks of reoffending. However, some women asserted that they did not have confirmed accommodation on the day of release.

Low and medium-risk prisoners are interviewed 12 weeks prior to release by the pre-release team. High-risk prisoners are managed by the inter-departmental risk management team and interviewed 12 weeks prior to release. Twice-monthly meetings between healthcare, inclusion and security share information and the need for support. Prisoners are not present at these meetings.

Release on temporary licence (ROTL) and childcare resettlement leave (CRL) are available for those who meet the criteria. Resettlement day release (RDR) ROTL, where appropriate, is available to be applied for if suitable work placements are sought or to maintain family ties for prisoners who do not meet the criteria for CRL.

Because of staff cuts and higher staff turnover, the ambition to achieve a cohesive working culture between prison and community-based services is still limited, which

can lead to variable and disconnected sentence planning as individuals are released through the gate.

Progression	
Administrative release due to merge	9
Automatic release	45
Bailed	73
Bailed detainee	2
Conditional release	552
Died	1
Discharged end of sentence and deported	9
End of custody licence scheme	39
Early Removal Scheme/Tariff Expired Early Removal Scheme release	4
Executive release	8
Final discharge to psychiatric hospital	12
Home detention curfew conditional release	131
Home detention curfew re-release	2
Non-custodial sentence	130
Not guilty	6
Parole granted	2
Post-recall release	2
Sentence completed	4

8. The work of the IMB

8.1 Board statistics

Recommended compliment of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of remote and actual visits to the establishment	278
Total number of segregation reviews monitored	

8.2 Applications to the IMB

There were **113** applications across 139 categories (26 applications had multiple categories).

Category	23/24	24/25	%
A - Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	8	6%
B - Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	3	8	6%
C- Equality	1	4	3%
D - Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	2	5	4%
E1 - Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	3	9	6%
E2 - Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	3	3	2%
F - Food and kitchens	3	5	4%
G - Health, including physical, mental, social care	37	49	35%
H1 - Property within the establishment	3	4	3%
H2 - Property during transfer or in another facility	3	5	4%
I - Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	3	8	6%
J - Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	19	16	11%
K - Transfers	2	5	4%
L - Miscellaneous	3	9	6%
Total	95	139	100%



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