



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Swansea

**For reporting period
1 November 2023 to 30 April 2025**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Swansea was built in 1861 to accommodate 219 prisoners and is a category B/C prison for young adult and adult men. The prison holds a mix of higher-risk (category B) and lower-risk (category C) prisoners, with security balanced alongside rehabilitation. The residential block is structurally unchanged, although modernisation and upgrading has taken place. A new wing, G wing, was opened in September 2015, adding another 60 places.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ever-increasing prison population meant that the 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) was set at 475¹. The prison originally provided single-cell accommodation, but most cells currently accommodate two prisoners.

HMP Swansea takes prisoners from the courts in the south west Wales region, including those in Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Llanelli, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest and Aberystwyth.

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

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- It is the Board's view, from its monitoring and general interactions with prisoners and staff, that HMP Swansea is generally a safe prison.
- HMP Swansea has a stable workforce and, in general, good prisoner and staff relationships. Overall levels of self-harm and violence are relatively low in comparison with other similar establishments, and systems are in place to promote and maintain safety and security in the prison.
- There were four deaths in custody² during the reporting period. The prison has taken action to address the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) recommendations with, for example, changes to the resettlement model to improve the safety of vulnerable prisoners being released.
- HMP Swansea has a comparatively low level of violence and all use of force incidents are reviewed for scrutiny purposes and to identify any learning. There is a continued focus on ensuring the use of body worn video cameras (BWVC) and, in particular, increasing the use of the BWVC pre-record function.
- From our observations, HMP Swansea runs a safe and effective reception, although prisoner turnover and population pressures present challenges.

Fair and humane treatment

- HMP Swansea's largely Victorian estate presents ongoing challenges. A programme of refurbishment and upgrading is underway, although pace and scale is impacted by funding availability. Buildings and facilities are generally clean and well maintained, although double occupancy of cells originally designed for one creates overcrowded living conditions for most prisoners.
- Overall, the catering provision should be commended for providing a good selection of meals for both the general population and a number of religious and dietary requirements on an extremely tight budget. In the Board's view, addressing portion inconsistencies and potentially reviewing meal schedules could contribute to better nutritional support and greater satisfaction among prisoners.
- There has been improvement to the key working model and the prison is getting closer to achieving key working session targets. However, staff availability can impact meeting key working targets, and there remains some variability in the quality of key working records.
- From our observations, the care and separation unit (CSU), where prisoners are kept apart from the rest of the prison population, provides a fair and safe regime overall. However, we are concerned about the length of time some prisoners with significant mental health needs wait to be transferred to mental health inpatient facilities.
- HMP Swansea has a range of translated information for prisoners whose first language is not English. The prison has initiated work to expand on the range

² Deaths in custody includes prisoner deaths occurring in the prison and the deaths of recently released prisoners occurring within 14 days of release from prison.

of materials and languages translated and to improve induction for prisoners whose first language is not English. Verbal communication is assisted in a number of ways, but there could be better awareness of the impact of limited English language ability for individual prisoners.

- There is inconsistency in the faith-related items available for prisoners to order from catalogue, which is dependent on supplier contracts.
- Property has remained the leading area of prisoner complaint for the last three years, with the IMB continuing to receive frequent complaints about missing property.

Health and wellbeing

- During the reporting period, prisoners were able to access GP, dental and optician appointments, generally within 4-6 weeks. There are no inpatient facilities in the prison, but the management of hospital attendances appeared to be satisfactory.
- From our observations, the healthcare department continues to provide a reliable service, despite a significant workload and staffing challenges, particularly at times of staff holiday and sickness.
- The Board remains concerned that a significant number of people with mental health issues find themselves in prison, and that those requiring inpatient psychiatric care often wait a lengthy period for a suitable inpatient bed. Whilst awaiting transfer, many of these prisoners find themselves located in the care and separation unit, in a constant watch cell, or another cell in segregation conditions.
- All healthcare-related complaints are handled by the local health board, through their internal procedure, and the outcomes are not reported or available to the IMB. We consider this to be a serious weakness in our ability to monitor all services within the prison.

Progression and resettlement

- The education team has implemented improvements to the organisation, delivery and management of the service. Support for prisoners with additional learning needs is provided by the neurodiversity team, together with outreach sessions for those hard to reach and vulnerable prisoners who may not otherwise engage in learning programmes. The library has continued to provide an excellent service for prisoners, in the Board's view.
- Some improvement in the uptake of purposeful activity and the data captured to help leaders understand the causes of non-attendance has been made.
- There has been positive multi-agency involvement in employment-related training and provisions, which is having a positive impact on prisoners, both during their time in prison and on release.
- The reducing reoffending team has sought to ensure family contact is prioritised. In conjunction with the Prison Advice and Care Team (PACT) charity, the prison supports a number of initiatives to support families and children.
- Resettlement processes appear to have been strengthened, although sourcing sustainable accommodation on release remains very challenging. A 'Spend to Save' initiative for maintaining tenancies for sentenced prisoners is being piloted with some local authorities.

- The pace of prisoner turnover at HMP Swansea creates a challenging environment for maximising efforts to reduce reoffending and secure timely housing and community referrals. Our observations indicate that HMP Swansea is focused on overcoming the population challenges in this context.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Prisoners with significant mental health needs are being held for lengthy periods, often in segregated conditions, whilst waiting for specialist hospital care. Given that demand for inpatient care appears to exceed healthcare capacity, what specific actions will the Minister take to reduce delays, prevent the use of segregation for acutely unwell prisoners and ensure timely access to appropriate inpatient mental health treatment?
- HMP Swansea is constrained by an overcrowded Victorian estate. What actions will the Minister take to reduce overcrowding and improve the physical environment, particularly in respect of the double occupancy of cells originally designed for one?
- Following the Independent Review of Sentencing, what specific reductions in prisoner numbers does the Minister anticipate at HMP Swansea, and how will sentencing reforms address the ongoing pressures caused by high prisoner turnover and short custody periods?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Given that feasibility studies have now been completed, what funding will be available in 2025-2026 for the long-overdue upgrade of the fire alarm system, and when will work start?
- What plans and timescales are in place to introduce the information technology at HMP Swansea needed to allow prisoners to make applications online, thereby reducing reliance on paper systems and freeing up staff time?
- How are prisoner concerns about delayed transfer or loss of property between prisons being addressed, as this is a common complaint on prisoner transfer?
- How is the Prison Service ensuring access for prisoners to purchase prescribed items, including faith-related ones, across different supplier contracts?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- What actions are being taken to analyse and address the underlying causes of property issues continuing to be a leading source of complaint?
- How will focus be maintained on:
 - Achieving key working session targets and consistent quality standards?
 - Ensuring greater use of BWVCs, and the pre-record function in particular?
 - Raising staff awareness of the impact of limited language ability; and promoting The Big Word for translating important or sensitive information?

- If the ‘Spend to Save’ pilot for maintaining tenancies is shown to be effective, what plans are in place to extend the scheme to local authority partners not yet participating?
- In addition to acting on the twice-yearly catering survey findings, what scope is there to review meal schedules in order to reduce excessive gaps between meals and improve prisoner satisfaction?
- How will the Governor ensure that the IMB has consistent access to meeting agendas and minutes from the health partnership forum?

3.3 Response to the previous report

The Board raised a number of issues for specific consideration in its last report, as summarised below, together with the responses and a summary of progress.

Issue raised	Response	Progress
<p>To the Minister</p> <p>The number of prisoners who have significant mental health issues; and who are often on short-term sentences.</p>	<p>HMP Swansea’s dedicated mental health team are facilitating better communication and collaboration with community mental health services, with all new referrals, and the needs of men being released, discussed at weekly meetings.</p> <p>An Independent Review of Sentencing has been launched to examine the use and impact of short custodial sentences and to help ensure sentencing frameworks are consistent. HMP Swansea is also working alongside Probation Service colleagues to better support men serving short sentences.</p>	<p>The mental health team are committed to meeting prisoner needs, but staff capacity and demand present challenges. Many prisoners with significant mental health issues face long waits for inpatient or other specialist mental health services, often under segregated conditions.</p> <p>The <u>findings and recommendations</u> of the Independent Review of Sentencing were published in May 2025 and are welcomed by the Board. HMP Swansea is working collaboratively with partner agencies, but still faces the challenges of short custody periods and rapid population turnover.</p>
<p>To the Prison Service</p> <p>Concern about the effectiveness of Amey Projects and holding-to-account arrangements.</p>	<p>HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has spent around £10,000 on cell refurbishment work,</p>	<p>Cell refurbishment work has continued to progress, although pace and scale are</p>

	<p>completed in May 2024, and a smoke control system project is in development.</p> <p>Arrangements for holding Amey Projects to account are in place, with potential financial penalties should work not be carried out to required specifications.</p>	<p>dependent on the flow of available funding. Feasibility studies for the upgrading of the fire alarm system have been completed.</p>
<p>To Welsh Government</p> <p>Post-release accommodation remains a significant problem. The Board is very clear in its view that lacking a 'roof over your head' is a major contribution to reoffending.</p>	<p>HMPSS is supporting the Welsh Government's action plan to end homelessness, focused on early intervention and preventative measures. Swansea Local Authority has increased temporary accommodation for prison leavers and a new grant agreement with Neath Port Talbot has expanded access to accommodation, via the Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3). In addition, HMP Swansea works with the Commissioned Rehabilitative Service (CRS), which provides urgent accommodation support - to maintain tenancies and prevent homelessness for remanded prisoners.</p>	<p>The prison has made changes to the resettlement model so that all prisoners at risk of homelessness are seen within 72 hours of entering custody.</p> <p>A 'Spend to Save' initiative for maintaining tenancies for sentenced prisoners is being piloted, but not all local authorities are signed up to participate at present.</p>
<p>To the Governor</p> <p>The education and activities functions have been in turmoil during 2023.</p> <p>We are hoping that GOoD³ reviews can be</p>	<p>The head of learning and skills is implementing a programme of changes.</p> <p>A set time for GOoD reviews will be established.</p>	<p>The IMB notes improvements relating to education in this report.</p> <p>GOoD reviews have been regularised, better</p>

³ Good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews determine if a prisoner who has been segregated, due to disruptive behaviour, should continue to be held in segregation.

<p>organised in a way that enable members to observe them.</p>		<p>enabling IMB members to observe.</p>
<p>Issues remain around The Big Word and body worn video cameras (BWVCs). The Board feels that greater use of both is needed.</p>	<p>Use of The Big Word to support translation needs is promoted; and BWVC use monitored (and promoted) through use of force panel reviews.</p>	<p>More translated information is available, but continued promotion of The Big Word is still needed. Learning from use of force panel reviews is promoting use of BWVCs and their early activation.</p>

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 The staff and prisoner relationships established at the reception area of HMP Swansea appeared to be positive to IMB members observing induction; and incoming prisoners have commented to multiple IMB members on the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff.

4.1.2 Population pressures across the prison estate continue to impact HMP Swansea. There has been some increase in out-of-area placements. Due to the resulting longer duration of transport for prisoners, this can, on occasion, result in late arrivals at reception, creating challenges for reception staff in maintaining an efficient ‘bus-to-bed’ pathway at such times. The pathway includes receiving a prisoner at the gate, completing the required reception processes, and moving the prisoner to their first night cell location.

4.1.3 On arrival at HMP Swansea reception, and following confirmation of identity, the warrant, or other documentation authorising the incoming prisoner’s detention, all incoming prisoners should have immediate access to a healthcare professional. Medical needs are identified on arrival, with a suitable care pathway put in place as required. A cell-sharing risk assessment (CSRA) is required before allocation to a cell, and staff hold weekly CSRA review meetings (see also 5.1.3). Incoming prisoners have their property searched, catalogued and either returned or put into storage at reception. Any prisoner arriving at, or returning to, the prison following an external appointment is usually checked for concealed items, in line with policy (see section 4.5 for further details). Prisoners are typically offered the opportunity to shower, receive a meal and access support from reception orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) and Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide peer confidential emotional support).

4.1.4 Listeners are accessible to prisoners on arrival at reception and throughout their time in the prison. The Samaritans’ Listener scheme, which was first introduced at HMP Swansea in 1991, continues to operate successfully at the prison. There is a rota in place on all wings to ensure that the service is available 24 hours a day to anyone who is struggling to cope or who has suicidal or self-harming thoughts. It provides important, confidential emotional support to prisoners in need.

4.1.5 B wing serves as the ‘first night wing’ at HMP Swansea, and newly inducted prisoners move from reception to B wing, where they are supported by Insiders. These are prisoners trained in the policies and procedures of the establishment, who are able to offer peer support during a prisoner’s first night(s) in prison.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Deaths in custody

4.2.1 There were four deaths in custody during the reporting period. Three of these occurred in the community (within the timeframe requiring them to be classed as deaths in custody). Two of the four deaths remain under investigation by the Prisons

and Probation Ombudsman (PPO). The IMB is, therefore, only able to report on two of the four deaths in custody during the reporting period. The PPO recommendations centre on timely community and housing referrals, with one recommendation to HMP Swansea and two to the Probation Service, as summarised below. The individuals who died in custody have been anonymised and are referred to as Mr A and Mr B.

4.2.2 The death of Mr A

4.2.2.1 Mr A died from chronic alcohol misuse, with epilepsy, following his release from HMP Swansea ten days earlier. Probation staff did not refer him to the community drug and alcohol team and missed opportunities to do so. The PPO made a single recommendation to the head of the probation delivery unit for Dyfed-Powys. The recommendation and organisational response are summarised below.

<p>PPO recommendation to the head of the probation delivery unit for Dyfed-Powys</p> <p><i>To ‘ensure that when a risk is identified, appropriate referrals are promptly completed to the relevant community services’.</i></p>	<p>Organisational response (Probation):</p> <p><i>‘A learning day for resettlement practice was held for all practitioners across the probation delivery unit, which focused on the importance of completing pre-release work and necessary referrals linked with alcohol and drug misuse. A second learning day is being organised for March 2025, which will focus on the importance of pre-release work. Additionally, weekly pre-release tasking meetings will be established across the Dyfed-Powys probation delivery unit to support practitioners in completing high-quality pre-release work.’</i></p>
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4.2.3 The death of Mr B

4.2.3.1 Mr B died from drug toxicity, following his release from HMP Swansea five days earlier. The prison’s resettlement team had completed housing referrals for him just five days before his release. As a result, there was limited time to secure accommodation and Mr B was released homeless.

4.2.3.2 The PPO report noted that *‘the substance-misuse care received in prison was well-planned and an example of good practice’*. However, the PPO made the following recommendations in relation to housing, as set out below.

<p>PPO recommendation to the Governor of HMP Swansea:</p> <p><i>To ‘ensure that a process is created to identify newly arrived prisoners who are at risk of homelessness and that the resettlement team sees them at the earliest opportunity to maximise their chance of finding post-release accommodation’.</i></p>	<p>Organisational response (HMP Swansea):</p> <p><i>‘The resettlement model now ensures that all new admissions into HMP Swansea are interviewed by resettlement staff within 72 hours of arrival. Accommodation status is one of the key areas of assessment and, where necessary, timely referrals are made to Forward Trust. This is done either directly from the resettlement team, if the individual is on remand, or via community-based probation staff for those sentenced or recalled.’</i></p> <p>The IMB understands that this model is now in place.</p>
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<p>PPO recommendation to the Regional Probation Director for Swansea Neath Port Talbot:</p> <p>To ‘ensure that all probation practitioners are aware of the Duty to Refer Policy Framework and remind them of their responsibility to complete housing referrals’.</p>	<p>Organisational response (Probation):</p> <p>‘A notice to staff will be distributed to all probation practitioners, which will remind them of the contents of the Duty to Refer Policy Framework and their responsibility to complete housing referrals. Additionally, probation practitioners will also be reminded of their responsibilities by senior probation practitioners during their tasking meetings.’</p>
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Suicide and self-harm

4.2.4 There was an overall rise in self-harm from 2023 to 2024, with an increase of 22 recorded incidents. The figure for 2024 showed the highest annual total to date, reaching 180 events. The trend did not improve between January and April 2025, during which 80 incidents of self-harm were recorded, although this remains comparatively low within the broader context of similar establishments. The IMB will continue to monitor this, including any planned initiatives aimed at further reducing self-harm.

4.2.5 Based on our observations, the most common method of self-harm appears to be the use of an improvised ligature. Procedures are in place to prevent this through the provision of an anti-ligature cell and anti-ligature bedding. However, unfortunately, this does not stop a determined prisoner from attempting to self-harm.

4.2.6 The assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) process is a key preventive measure for prisoners at risk of suicide or harm. At ACCT review meetings, prison staff discuss the prisoner’s risk level, how they are coping and whether their care plan needs updating. IMB members have observed documentation of regular ACCT reviews being diarised, involving both the prisoner and a member of the mental health in-reach team (among other support functions within the prison). Of those the IMB has monitored, the reviews have been conducted with a compassionate and person-centred approach. The ACCT process is monitored by the prison, and included in daily reporting to the senior leadership team.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The overall level of violent incidents at HMP Swansea is relatively low, compared with other similar establishments, and has shown a slight decrease during the reporting period. In the Board’s view, this is, in part, due to the nature of its prisoner population (short sentences and local and returning prisoners), as well as its stable workforce, where officers often know the prisoners and are better able to de-escalate situations. There were, however, eight serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the reporting period, compared with four in the previous 18 months. The prison records all incidents, monitoring time, location and reasons, to help understand any common issues or patterns and to implement strategies for reduction (e.g. systems, regime or addressing individual behaviour).

4.3.2 Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIP) serve as a violence reduction tool to manage and support prisoners who are identified as posing an increased risk of violence. CSIPs focus on individual needs to help prisoners manage and move away from violent behaviours. A CSIP is a key component of efforts to reduce violence in prisons. At HMP Swansea, CSIP plans are reviewed with the individual and at regular safety intervention meetings (SIMs), with a clear multi-disciplinary approach in place. From our sampling of CSIP documents, actions and targets appear proportionate to the documented risk.

4.3.3 Self isolation is not a frequent occurrence at HMP Swansea. Self-isolators are individuals who have withdrawn from the majority of the regime and/or have limited engagement with staff or other prisoners, often spending most of the day in their cells. Where self-isolation has occurred, IMB members have seen evidence that they are reported on in daily updates, that individual cases are discussed at SIMs, and that interim measures are considered while the self-isolator's concerns are being addressed (e.g. creating time for the prisoner to shower when others are not present).

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 At HMP Swansea, as in all prisons, prison culture is a very important element in minimising the use of force. The prison has a comparatively low level of violence, and the IMB has observed that relationships between prisoners and staff are generally constructive (particularly as many prisoners are known to longer serving officers).

4.4.2 In the main, HMP Swansea has a stable, experienced workforce, although there are occasionally instances where inexperience may have had a bearing on the outcome of an incident, in the Board's view. This is not always due to staff being inexperienced because they are new, but sometimes reflects limited experience in situations that are not often encountered at HMP Swansea. The prison reviews use of force events at weekly use of force panel meetings, for both scrutiny purposes and to identify any learning points. This approach has been evident at meetings observed by IMB members.

4.4.3 Body worn video cameras (BWVCs) are available to all officers and their use is encouraged, as they provide important evidence when incidents occur. During the reporting period, the use of force panel has encouraged earlier activation of body worn video cameras, including use of the pre-record function⁴. BWVCs should be switched on to record the lead up to, and any, use of force. The camera should not be turned off until the individual has been relocated, the incident is fully resolved, and the hot debrief held. However, some prisoners have complained that officers leave their cameras switched off, rendering the pre-record facility unavailable. Some prisoners have also alleged that staff have inflamed incidents through confrontation or an over-zealous response, and that cameras are sometimes only turned on when the prisoner loses their temper and the heated situation boils over to a control-and-restraint event. The IMB Chair has brought this to the attention of the Governor, and the IMB will continue to monitor the situation.

⁴ BWVCs have a pre-record function, so the 30 seconds of footage prior to an officer pressing record will also be retained, to better display the lead up to any incident.

4.4.4 In late 2024, Swansea IMB members observed a demonstration of use-of-force techniques to better understand the methods used to manage challenging prisoner behaviour. Some of the techniques can appear quite physical, and could give that impression if seen on CCTV. Observing the training has given IMB members a clearer understanding of why certain methods are used when managing a prisoner's behaviour. The IMB continues to monitor how the prison handles use of force incidents to ensure that measures are appropriate and not excessive.

4.4.5 Individuals may need to be forcibly relocated around an establishment, such as to the segregation unit, also known as the care and separation unit, or CSU. On the few occasions that IMB members have observed such relocations, control and restraint (C&R) appeared appropriate and proportionate, and staff endeavoured to maintain the prisoner's dignity.

4.4.6 The IMB had concerns over whether the phased roll-out of training in the new C&R techniques implemented over a year ago would create issues in the use of force, until all staff were trained in the new techniques. However, training appeared to roll out relatively quickly with instructors now running refresher training.

4.4.7 The IMB understands that there is a bi-weekly equality meeting held by prison staff, which monitors for any disproportionate use of force involving prisoners with protected characteristics (including, age, race, religion, sex, disability and gender reassignment). The IMB is not aware of any specific adverse trend in this regard.

4.4.8 The IMB receives the notes from the weekly use of force panel and the quarterly segregation, monitoring and review group (SMARG), which allows us to review incidents, the scrutiny applied and any learning or training points raised. Although [IMB monitoring guidance](#) states that Boards should be notified on a weekly basis of any use of force incidents, we do not receive a weekly list of incidents to enable cross-referencing, although it is the prison's policy to review all incidents.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

4.5.1 To prevent illicit items being smuggled into the prison, the prison uses an X-ray body scanner, a BOSS (body orifice security scanner) chair and operational dogs (both for visits and cell searches). Prisoners found to have secreted items are held in segregation until the items are passed, as confirmed by daily X-ray body scans, although these scans may sometimes be refused by prisoners. (See 5.2 for further detail regarding segregation).

4.5.2 All prisoners are X-ray body scanned at reception. This is because the prison has assessed reception as the most significant high-risk entry point for illicit substances. In accordance with policy, it has therefore created a high-risk 'cohort' of all prisoners arriving (or returning from recall/court) via reception to be body scanned. Mandatory X-ray body scanning has generated complaints from prisoners, with several prisoners alleging false positives.

4.5.3 Early in 2025, the X-ray body scanner was not operational for three days whilst a repair was undertaken. This meant that some prisoners were held in segregated conditions for longer than they usually would be at this time. This situation has not previously arisen, and the X-ray body scanner was repaired under the maintenance contract at the earliest opportunity.

4.5.4 Based on data trends, the safeguards in place to prevent illicit substances being brought into the prison appear to be working well, and most incidences of prisoners found with illicit items occur on their arrival at the prison. As a result of this, 66% of prisoners held in the CSU during the reporting period were in segregation due to their body scan being positive for a secreted item.

4.5.5 A National Security Framework (NSF) is in place to help establishments identify and reduce security risks. The NSF collection of guidance and policy documents informs HMP Swansea's local security strategy (LSS). Swansea also has a local drug strategy in place.

4.5.6 Dedicated search teams (DSTs), which are organised in regional hubs, are deployed to HMP Swansea. They act on intelligence to prevent and deter potential threats of disorder. These specially trained teams work with search dog units and use other specialist search equipment to combat threats such as drugs, drones and mobile phones.

4.5.7 There were 435 recorded finds in the prison during the reporting period, including drugs, weapons, phones and alcohol.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation and food

5.1.1 Despite HMP Swansea being a largely Victorian prison, buildings appear generally well maintained. There is an 'estates' meeting every week with the Governor so that maintenance issues are raised promptly and addressed. Prisoners employed as wing cleaners ensure a consistent and good standard of cleanliness on the wings, including shower areas.

5.1.2 A programme of cell refurbishment has taken place over a number of years with D and F wings completed in 2022 by the in-house team. Delays to moving forward with the refurbishment programme were caused by the outsourcing of the work to Amey Projects and this bid not being prioritised in the reporting year. Funding has been made available for the 2025-2026 financial year to move forward with A wing cell refurbishment.

5.1.3 Despite the improvement that the upgrading of cells has achieved so far, the majority of prisoners are still doubling up in cells designed for one person. Decisions around cell sharing are based on risk assessment, as noted in section 4.1.3, with arrangements in place to review cases on a weekly basis at CSRA meetings.

5.1.4 Feasibility studies undertaken during the reporting year should see funding made available for the long-overdue upgrading of the fire alarm system. Safety is currently maintained by daily fire-panel checks and weekly fire-alarm testing throughout the prison.

5.1.5 During the reporting period, the kitchen work party averaged 28 men, who work across the week. Men working in the kitchen and at the wing serveries achieve a Food Passport qualification, which is industry recognised. The charity Clink provided a number of men the opportunity to achieve NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) Level 1 or 2 and support in finding employment on release. Unfortunately, Clink's funding ceased at the end of March 2024. Alternatives to the Clink programme are being explored by senior kitchen staff.

5.1.6 The 'snack' bar at the visits centre is managed by the PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust) charity, with the kitchen preparing the food for sale at the visits facility. Feedback from prisoners and visitors continues to be extremely positive, while providing work opportunities for a few prisoners.

5.1.7 The IMB made weekly visits throughout the reporting period to the kitchen area, engaging with men who were preparing food, cooking and carrying out other duties, including cleaning and dealing with stock deliveries. The kitchen is a busy area but has consistently appeared well organised, with good standards of hygiene and cleanliness. Likewise, the serving of meals on wings is frequently observed by the IMB and, again, a good standard of hygiene observed. However, due to the physical constraints of the Victorian prison structure, there are no communal eating areas and men must eat their meals in (largely shared) cells.

5.1.8 During the reporting period, the food budget allocation per prisoner averaged £2.90 per day. Any special diets must be provided out of that budget. At any time, special diets may include prisoners with lactose intolerance, diabetes, celiac disease, and religious requirements. The lunch and dinner menu provide five choices and always include a vegetarian, vegan and halal option. During 2024, a new

software system was installed, giving men access to significantly more meal information (including calorific content, allergy details), enabling prisoners to make more informed dietary choices. About eight 'themed' menus were provided during the reporting period, including an Eid feast, all advertised on in-cell TV and providing some variety.

5.1.9 Prisoners seem generally satisfied with evening meal provisions. The main feedback from prisoners during the reporting period concerns portion sizes and meal scheduling. The kitchen conducts two surveys per year and portion size is always mentioned. In terms of meal scheduling, the early timing of the evening meal results in a long gap until breakfast, which is provided the night before as a cold option, with relatively small cereal portions.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 During the reporting period, just over 700 prisoners were held in the care and separation unit (CSU). Over 66% of these were held under the good order or discipline rule (GOoD), due to receiving a positive body scan at reception. At times, the high number of positive body scans means that some prisoners are held under segregated conditions on other wings, primarily the first-night wing (B wing).

5.2.2 Prisoners generally receive an initial health screening assessment before being transferred to the CSU, and individual exit plan meetings are held throughout the week. The majority of prisoners in segregation are held under GOoD, with low numbers receiving cellular confinement following adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules).

5.2.3 While segregated prisoners generally report no major issues, a recurring concern raised with the IMB related to the loss of personal property, most often during transfers from wing cells, which causes frustration.

5.2.4 The IMB continues to express concern about the length of time prisoners can spend in the CSU while awaiting transfer to specialist mental health facilities. During the reporting period, one prisoner spent over 80 days (over two extended periods) awaiting transfer to a mental health hospital. Although segregation is viewed as the least harmful option, concerns persist regarding its impact on individuals with severe and complex mental health needs. While these types of prisoners will have access to the mental health in-reach team, their day-to-day management falls to the officers on the wing. While officers have a range of skills for dealing with challenging behaviour, they are not specifically trained to deal with the kinds of behaviour exhibited by seriously mentally unwell prisoners.

5.2.5 IMB observations throughout the reporting period indicate that, overall, the CSU provides a fair and safe regime. At times, this seems somewhat restricted, with no purposeful activity, especially for men who may be spending extended periods of time segregated. The unit appears to be adequately staffed, with officers covering the CSU and C wing, the latter housing more vulnerable prisoners. During the reporting period, notification of men being transferred to the CSU has been inconsistent. Likewise, notification of GOoD reviews (which check that keeping someone in segregation is still necessary, appropriate, lawful and proportionate) has impacted the Board's ability to observe the latter, although a consistent timing for GOoD reviews has now been established.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 As mentioned elsewhere in this report, HMP Swansea continues to enjoy a stable workforce, with a relatively low turnover of staff. Sickness absence has also been comparatively low historically, although sickness has been above the nine-day target for 13 of the 18 months in the reporting period. While averaging at 10.8 days, sickness rates have remained above target since September 2024, peaking at 17.43 days in March 2025.

5.3.2 Communication between officers and prisoners is, in general, observed to be positive, and reoffending rates mean that prisoners will often be known to staff from previous sentences. All formal applications and requests by prisoners are, however, made on paper, using a variety of different forms. The prison is wired to support the introduction of prisoner digital self-service, which would speed up processes for prisoners and reduce time spent on administration by staff. Funding to introduce the technology has not yet become available.

5.3.3 Each wing has prisoner representatives who bring issues to the bi-weekly wing consultation meetings, and the monthly prisoner consultation committee is chaired by the head of residential services. The latter is primarily to invite, gather and discuss ideas to help improve the prison and make it a better place. Both of these initiatives provide a forum for raising issues preventing escalation. The Board has heard prisoners say that they appreciate these forums.

5.3.4 Significantly fewer prisoners were allocated a key worker during the reporting period, primarily due to changes in the allocation criteria (discussed further in 5.3.5). A six-month snapshot, between November 2022 and April 2023, showed over 2,000 sessions were held, compared with just under 700 during the same period in 2023-2024. Over the five-month period between November 2023 and April 2024, however, targets were only met once (and exceeded), with completion rates falling to 59% on three occasions.

5.3.5 The three-tier model for allocating key workers is designed to focus on those with the greatest need and to use officer time effectively. Level 1 provides weekly support to those with a high level of need, allocated on average to only 15 prisoners; Level 2 provides fortnightly support as a minimum and includes priority groups and those subject to Choices for Change; and Level 3, considered to be experienced prisoners with limited needs, is offered depending on staffing levels or at the prisoner's request. While the model prioritising those with the greatest needs has clearly reduced demands on officer time, it has not necessarily resulted in the expected performance being met.

5.3.6 In order to address issues with key working, from October 2024, key working has come under the management of the head of residential services, with custodial managers responsible for its day-to-day management. This has meant much more accountability. There continues to be room for improvement: a monthly report compiled by the lead Governor in April 2025 showed an average session completion rate during that period of just over 79%. There were significant fluctuations largely due to staff detailing issues, redeployment and operational demands such as ACCT assessments and constant watch duties. However, measures are in place to continue the upward trend, and key working performance data is provided on a daily basis to the senior management team (SMT), giving the work a higher profile.

5.3.7 The IMB has not received applications (prisoners' written representations) regarding key workers/key working sessions, and it is a subject likely to be raised by the IMB in conversation rather than instigated by prisoners. Access to session notes is available and it is clear that the quality of recording varies amongst officers. Clear guidance is available to staff on both the areas to be covered and what should be included in key work reports, but there is still room for improvement.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 Equality meetings, held on a monthly basis at the start of the reporting period, have moved to bi-monthly but are still attended by a range of officers and chaired by a member of the leadership team. There is a manager lead (custodial manager or Governor) for each protected characteristic group. A large amount of data continues to be collected and presented at these meetings, including outcomes for protected groups across areas such as use of force, segregation, adjudications, discrimination incident reporting, foreign national prisoner, employment and LGBTQ+, etc. The Board noted that this data is subject to critical scrutiny and that areas of concern are flagged. Actions from previous meetings are dealt with at the start of each session and are generally observed to be completed effectively.

5.4.2 Averaged over the reporting period, approximately 18% of prisoners were from an ethnic minority background. With respect to outcomes for prisoners in this group, the Board noted that although there have been some minor fluctuations, there has been no consistent disproportionality in areas noted above (e.g. use of force, segregation, adjudications, etc.) that would raise concerns.

5.4.3 There were small fluctuations in the number of foreign national prisoners each month, with 62 recorded in November 2023 compared with 52 in June 2024, and a slight overall increase on the previous reporting period. During the period in review, the IMB also carried out a short survey to find out whether language barriers had an impact on health, rehabilitation or other outcomes. A total of 12 prisoners and eight officers took part in the survey.

5.4.4 Foreign national prisoners whose first language is not English are provided with written information on arrival, although the range of languages available is still developing. Prisoners surveyed self-assessed their language skills as reasonable for general conversation, but are often not made aware that they can request assistance for specialised language services, such as, for example, relating to medical or legal issues.

5.4.5 Wing staff endeavour to place speakers of the same language together when possible and have made translation cards to assist with general regime information. A programme of work for translating a broader range of information and improving induction and educational assessment for non-English speaking prisoners is underway (see 7.1.9 for details).

5.4.6 The Big Word, the official translation tool, appears to be rarely used, as officers find it time consuming so fall back on more fluent prisoners to assist. With regard to private health-related information, this is not ideal. As noted in previous annual reports, more awareness of the impact of limited language ability and encouragement to use The Big Word for important information, such as that related to health and other outcomes, would help to remove this inequality.

In relation to Welsh language, bilingual material is available and the prison has a list of Welsh speaking staff to assist those who wish to converse in Welsh.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 The chaplaincy department continues to offer faith-related activities and services that meet the needs of most of the prisoners who wish to use them. Prisoners report that chaplaincy staff treat them with dignity and respect, and they are particularly pleased with the level of enthusiasm, which they find motivating.

5.5.2 There seems to be a disparity between items accessible to Christian prisoners and those provided for Muslim prisoners, despite clear guidance in the PSI (Prison Service Instruction) 05/2016 (Faith and Pastoral Care). Out of fairness and respect, prayer beads, for example, should be available on the canteen supply contract. A lack of cultural and religious awareness amongst some officers is apparent, in that there is a lack of understanding about the importance of certain religious items.

5.6 Complaints

5.6.1 The business hub keeps track of all complaints and the relevant response times and provides a comprehensive, monthly breakdown of complaints data. This includes the numbers of complaints received from each wing, the subject of the complaints, the ethnicity of complainants, the complaints response areas and the numbers and areas of late responses. The top three complaint areas are highlighted, and month-by-month and year-on-year comparisons can be made. This information is made available for the IMB to scrutinise.

5.6.2 During 2024, there were 507 stage 1 (ordinary) complaints and 47 stage 1a complaints (appeals), with 92% responded to within policy timescales. The top three complaints categories during that period were:

- Property.
- Other (includes various issues not covered under other complaint categories, such as regime and showers not working).
- Home detention curfew (HDC) appeals.

5.6.3 The complaints database was revised for 2025 to include a wider range of subject headings, helping to break down complaint issues more effectively and support more accurate analysis. In January to April 2025, there were 205 stage 1 complaints and 18 stage 1a complaints, with 89% responded to within timescales. Property and HDC appeals remained in the top three complaints categories, but letters and censors became the second highest category in this period. While the IMB has not received many applications regarding letters and censors, those received indicate prisoner frustration with delayed or lost mail. This is a concern for both maintaining family contact and ensuring timely receipt of important legal paperwork.

5.6.4 Property has remained the top area of complaint made to the prison for the last three years, and the IMB also receives frequent complaints about missing property. Issues can arise when clothing and valuables are sent with prisoners on transfer or when cell clearances (temporary or otherwise) are undertaken. There is also an issue for prisoners transferred from other prisons or courts where property does not follow the prisoner. Some of these complaints require external responses.

5.6.5 During the reporting period, the IMB has carried out a sampling of complaints paperwork, focusing on the quality of responses provided to prisoners. In some cases, responses were found to be inadequate or did not fully address all the issues raised by the prisoner. IMB members will continue to carry out sampling as part of its monitoring practice. Reviewing the prison's stage 1 complaint paperwork, where prisoners have made an application to the IMB and stated they have previously complained to the prison, is standard practice in addressing their application to the IMB and provides another opportunity to scrutinise the quality of responses.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 Healthcare services continue to be provided by Swansea Bay University Health Board (UHB). Dental services are provided through a contract with Time for Teeth and optometry services by The Prison Optician Trust. The physiotherapy service is now provided by the Swansea Bay UHB on a weekly sessional basis.

6.1.2 The healthcare team continues to maintain strong links with mental health services, the vulnerable person's outreach nurse, and the doctors at the High Street surgery in Swansea, which prisoners of no fixed abode attend on release.

6.1.3 General Practitioner (GP) services can be accessed out-of-hours. Sexual Health clinics continue to be provided by the healthcare team with communication with specialists where required.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 There is no inpatient facility at HMP Swansea. Men requiring hospital treatment attend local hospitals. There is a daily visit by a General Practitioner (GP).

6.2.2 During the reporting period, prisoners were able to access GP, dental and optician appointments, and wait times for routine appointments with the GP, dentist and optician were within four to six weeks.

6.2.3 The healthcare team has a high workload, as many prisoners have complex health needs and require medication. They carry out screening of new prisoners on arrival, are involved in the ACCT process and respond to medical emergencies within the prison. In the Board's view, they continue to provide a reliable service, with men receiving timely access to healthcare.

6.2.4 As previously stated, there is no inpatient facility, but the management of external hospital appointments appeared to be satisfactory, with timely and adequate provision.

6.2.5 The majority of issues referred to the IMB relating to healthcare were satisfactorily resolved, and healthcare staff are helpful in addressing issues brought to them by the Board. However, all formal complaints are handled by the local health board, through its internal procedures, and the outcomes are not shared with the IMB. The Board considers this lack of transparency a significant weakness in its ability to monitor healthcare services effectively.

6.2.6 Healthcare staffing levels can be a challenge, particularly at times of holiday and sickness. It is important that a satisfactory level of provision is maintained to ensure the routine of the prison is not detrimentally affected.

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 The mental health in-reach team and the primary care crisis intervention team are permanently based in HMP Swansea. They are involved in care and separation checks and attend ACCT reviews. These teams are backfilled by members of the core team when required.

6.3.2 As outlined in section 5.2.4 of the report, the Board remains concerned about the number of men with challenging and serious mental health conditions held in the CSU for extended periods, due to the lack of appropriate alternative accommodation. While prison staff make every effort to meet these individuals' needs, they do not have the specialist training or resources required to do so adequately.

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 The safeguarding panel comprised both internal and external stakeholders. The establishment continued to ensure it maintained consistency of care for those who had been subject to social services interventions, in line with legal obligations. The panel reviewed all referrals on a quarterly basis, and referrals were tracked.

6.4.2 Screening for safeguarding issues at reception can highlight such issues and a referral to social services can then be made. Elderly prisoners are automatically considered for referral.

6.5 Exercise, regime

6.5.1 During the reporting period, exercise provision continued at normal levels and remained compliant with national standards. However, there was an increase in the number of applications citing a lack of access to exercise. The IMB will continue to monitor this.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 The integrated substance misuse service provided by Dyfodol delivered psychosocial interventions, and Swansea Bay University Health Board also provided clinical services. Newly arrived prisoners with drug and alcohol problems were identified promptly and received an assessment and support from the primary healthcare team.

6.6.2 The 12-step addiction recovery programme continued to be well received during the reporting period, with positive feedback around the outcomes reported. The healthcare team was involved in the pre-release planning, which focused on relapse prevention, harm minimisation and continuing treatment if required, with referral to community services.

6.6.3 During the last reporting period, the healthcare team, in partnership with the prison, piloted a scheme to provide naloxone (a drug that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose) to men being released. This initiative has been continued, and all men assessed as high risk are provided the medication on release.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) charity continues to support families to maintain relationships while in custody. The team offers a range of emotional and practical support before, during and after social visits. A relatively new initiative being implemented is the provision of 'quiet visits', in smaller rooms with limited numbers. PACT staff have informed the Board that these visits are invaluable for children who become distressed or overwhelmed by the busy and noisy environment of the main visits hall. This initiative helps to maintain family contact in a more comfortable and child-friendly setting. Feedback from families has been positive.

6.7.2 All prisoners have the opportunity to access the gym, and participation is high across the establishment. Dedicated gym sessions for prisoners over the age of 50 are held regularly. Additional activities tailored to this age group include a chess club during the winter months and bowls in the summer.

6.7.3 The Board is pleased to see that strong links have been established between the prison and the local community. Staff and prisoners in the multi-skills workshops were commissioned by the British Royal Legion, City of Swansea branch, to design and produce a display for the Garden of Remembrance, located outside the National Waterfront Museum, for Remembrance Day. As part of the project, they created 15 life-size silhouettes representing armed forces personnel, resulting in a striking and meaningful display. This is a great opportunity for prisoners to take pride in their work and give back to the local community.

6.7.4 The Board is pleased to see that HMP Swansea is dedicated to supporting staff wellbeing. Feedback from staff surveys helps to shape the programme of events, which have included activities such as coffee-and-chat sessions, bingo and swimming.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education

7.1.1 Prior to the reporting period, in July 2023, a head of education, skills and work (HoESW) was appointed to oversee purposeful activity and provide leadership continuity for education during the long-term absence of the head of learning and skills (HoLS). However, wider staffing pressures meant it was challenging to maintain the full range of education provision across 2023. The HoLS returned in 2024 and resumed direct management of the education service. During the reporting period, two teachers were recruited to support essential skills, and two part-time quality managers were appointed to support quality assurance and the sharing of best practice.

7.1.2 HMP Swansea provides a broad range of learning and skills programmes, with qualifications from recognised awarding bodies, including [Agored](#), [GQA](#), [AIM](#) and [BICS](#). Core learning and skills provision includes:

- Essential skills, including literacy and numeracy.
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Work ready and upskilling (e.g. catering, construction and cleaning).
- Information communication and technology (ICT).

7.1.3 A reading strategy is in place, and a range of vocational qualifications is available, including [BICSc](#), multi-skills, [CSCS](#), Food Passport (noted in 5.1.5), and Level 1 gym coaching. Supplementary classes depend on third-sector funding, which means this part of the curriculum is less well supported. For example, the previously successful 'changing tunes' music class has not run for some time, although guitars continue to be loaned to prisoners.

7.1.4 Language and culture are promoted through activities during the reporting period, including an Eisteddfod, while the COMPASS programme (a personal development and wellbeing programme) also offers opportunities to explore cultural awareness, values and beliefs. COMPASS also covers topics such as substance misuse and stress management, provides a peer mentor programme and offers support for learners with additional learning needs (ALN).

7.1.5 A neurodiversity support manager (NSM) leads on meeting the needs of those with ALN and oversee wider neurodiversity provision across the prison. In addition to wellbeing services, the neurodiversity 'harbour' offers classroom-based and outreach sessions for those hard-to-reach and vulnerable prisoners who may otherwise not engage in learning programmes.

7.1.6 In-cell learning is supported for Entry Level 1 to Level 2 via the wellbeing outreach programme, while more challenging routes to progress to Level 4 and on to distance learning also exist. The prison's demographic does, however, limit the range of educational courses that can be delivered. In response, the team has focused on making the curriculum more agile to better match labour market needs, developing unitised learning that better supports men serving short sentences or affected by high population turnover.

An apprenticeship-style model has been introduced in the workshops, offering digital learning and industry-related qualifications. The education department also received a national impact award from AIM in recognition of its innovative use of Coracle laptop-based e-learning. In addition, the employment advisory board continues to strengthen links with local employers and supplies labour-market intelligence that helps inform and shape curriculum development.

7.1.7 Whilst we did not comment on the education service in our last report due to the significant flux within the department during 2023, we were concerned that more focused management attention was needed to improve the following.

- The quality and timeliness of induction.
- Activity data and management information.
- ESW (education, skills and work) allocation and attendance.

7.1.8 Progress has been made during the reporting period, with a quality improvement plan also in place to maintain focus on key areas and address any recommendations arising from quality, inspection or regulatory reviews. Specifically, we note:

- An improved waiting list position for induction.
- New formats for induction information, due to be completed in June 2025, covering life in prison, jobs and wages, employment pathways and the courses and training needed.
- A collaborative approach at the labour board to align education and training, employment in prison and longer-term job goals.
- Improved accuracy of personal development plans, used to identify learning needs and plan progression steps, with a pilot scheme for making the information more accessible electronically, including on prisoner transfer.
- A strengthened 'activities' function and approach, to deliver greater uptake of available spaces, for induction and purposeful activity.
- Improved data management, with better recording and analysis of attendance and reasons for non-attendance.
- A survey of those not engaging in education and training is in progress April 2025.

7.1.9 We also note a significant body of work, led by the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher, to better address the language needs of those whose first language is not English. This work was not yet complete by the end of the reporting period, but includes translation of information for reception arrivals, menu choices, general induction and educational assessment ('Do-it-Profiler'). There are also plans to develop a foreign national prisoner forum and separate education induction for non-English speakers.

Leaders and staff show commitment to meeting the needs of prisoners, with a focus on improvement and providing care, support and guidance to learners. Education, skills and work are incentivised through, for example, increased time out of cell and evening association. During our visits, we observed staff encouragement of learners and the valuable contribution of trained peer mentors. Monthly staff training is also planned across the year to support the learning and development of staff, alongside wider quality assurance work, such as lesson observations.

Library

7.1.10 The library service, provided by Swansea Council, is run by two dedicated part-time librarians. The librarians are assisted by two trained prisoner orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) and the service also receives good support from staff. During our visits, the enthusiasm and commitment of the librarians and orderlies has been very evident.

7.1.11 The library is actively promoted and well attended, with data on visits and issues of books and DVDs regularly reported to management. The data shows an increasing use of the library service over recent years, with sustained increases in visits. During the 18-month reporting period, November 2023 to April 2025, there were 12,092 issues of books/DVDs, 4,411 visits from wings and workshops, and 19,329 visits from education. This compares with 13,303 issues, 3,662 wing/workshop visits and 18,882 education visits for the previous 18-months.

7.1.12 The library provides a welcoming environment, with a range of resources and services to encourage reading for pleasure and to support learning, personal development, self-care and wellbeing. Library enrolment is a key step in the induction process and the service has a close, productive relationship with the education team. The Shannon Trust charity provides a good selection of books for emergent readers, with support from trained peer mentors. The library also offers audio and large-print books for visually impaired readers, as well as a selection of Welsh and foreign-language books.

7.1.13 For prisoners who are unable or unwilling to visit the library, a supply of withdrawn-stock books is available on the wings and in workshops. Specific requests can be made, and an inter-library request system is in place. Required publications, such as *Archbold's Criminal Pleading, Evidence and Practice*, are also readily available.

7.1.14 The library was noted as a best practice example in collaborative and partnership working in 2022 and continues to demonstrate a proactive and engaged approach to service delivery, in the Board's view. During 2023, the service celebrated its 75th anniversary with monthly events aimed at improving literacy and wellbeing. Regular events have continued in the reporting period, including competitions; celebrations; mental health and wellbeing sessions; a weekly over 50s group; and reading challenges, which attract a certificate and positive case note. In May 2024, Swansea was the first prison library included in, and to gain, a [Library of Sanctuary award](#) (as part of Swansea Libraries). In April 2025, a computerised lending system was introduced.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 There are a range of employment opportunities for prisoners both on and off the wings. Those working on the wings include cleaners, barbers, support and peer mentors and servery employees. Off-wing employment and training includes waste management, tailoring, multi-skills, BICS (British Institute of Cleaning Science, which is the main awarding and training body for professional cleaning qualifications), laundry, the V-Aid workshop (where prisoners produce emergency aid parcels and take part in accredited training delivered in partnership with the V-Aid charity), the library, the kitchen and the Mugshot Cafe (which continues to be very busy). The

employment hub continues to build links with employers to ensure courses have a realistic prospect of enabling men to find employment on release. It must be noted that space is very limited, and work and training opportunities need to be prioritised.

7.2.2 An average of 77% of prisoners are involved in purposeful activity each week. For those in employment, attendance is monitored carefully, with data reviewed at morning briefings and at a weekly multidisciplinary board that tracks attendance patterns, referral trends and levels of engagement, particularly among young adults referred to Working Wales. An incentivisation scheme, 'prisoner employee of the month', has been introduced to encourage participation through monthly bonuses. The impact of this has yet to be evaluated. Instructors and teachers continue to show commitment as they recognise the role education and training play in reducing reoffending.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 Due to pressure on prison spaces, offender management unit (OMU) staff have had to adjust to new ways of working. The introduction of the temporary presumptive recategorisation scheme (TPRS) and the standard determinate sentence early release measure in autumn 2024 have impacted significantly on the OMU, as well as on the delivery of programmes and training at HMP Swansea. The number of transfers out of the establishment has also increased exponentially and the high turnover of prisoners at HMP Swansea also impacts the Public Protection Manual process⁵ (used to manage and reduce risks to the public during a prisoner's custody and release). It must be noted, however, that very few applications from prisoners involve complaints about the OMU.

7.3.2 Prisoner offender managers (POMs) have received significant training to ensure they are delivering one-to-one sessions with the men. A range of interventions is being delivered. These include: Choices for Change (focusing on thinking and attitudes for those under 25); Stepping Stones (over 25s' cognitive thinking); Respectful Relationships (a domestic abuse programme delivered on a one-to-one basis); and DRIVE (through-the-gate intervention for men identified as being high-risk perpetrators of domestic abuse). A total of 33 cases have been opened since the DRIVE programme was implemented in 2023.

7.3.3 A long-awaited bail information officer has been appointed and took up his post toward the end of the reporting period in spring 2025.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 The reducing reoffending team is proactive and strives to ensure family contact is prioritised. Family forums are held, along with regular surveys that inform initiatives and practice.

7.4.2 The school referral pathway, to support families as part of the 'hidden sentence' initiative, has resulted in increased referrals to the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT). Training is delivered to professionals working directly with children by the children and young person's practitioner.

⁵ The Public Protection Manual PSI 18/2016 was discontinued in May 2025. It was replaced by the Prison Public Protection Policy Framework, published in November 2024, with a six-month implementation period.

7.4.3 PACT provides private smaller group sessions for those with additional learning needs (ALN). Each child who attends these sessions has a 'my visiting passport', to inform staff of their needs, and a section listing the sensory/fidget toys that help to regulate their emotions. Four families attended the recent ALN visit session; private ALN visits are also being arranged. A business case was submitted to purchase portable sensory kits. These will be used for quiet visits and ALN visits and will be located in the PACT room.

7.4.4 In October 2024, PACT held its first animals interactive family day (which brings together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings). Excellent feedback was received in the prisoner forum held in December 2024. Fourteen families participated in the Christmas family day. All children received gifts donated by a charity and arrangements were made for the children to present their father with a gift, a photo in the form of a Christmas bauble.

7.4.5 In December 2024, a two-hour wellbeing event was hosted for men who do not receive social visits. Drinks and snacks were provided and several support agencies attended, including a special guest from the charity, Fighting Homelessness. Acupuncture and health checks were also delivered. The feedback from attendees was very positive. This has developed further and has subsequently taken place every two months.

7.4.6 During the reporting period, the PACT team introduced family forums (coffee and chat). These take place every six weeks and are proving very successful. As a result of feedback, a wellbeing initiative will be set up. A coffee-and-chat session was held, where 10 families discussed a clothing exchange.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Demand for resettlement services continues to be high, due to the turnover of prisoners. Despite the challenges faced by the team, especially in light of recent sentencing changes, the staff try to see all men within three days of arriving at HMP Swansea.

7.5.2 Following the retirement of the previous post-holder, a new manager was appointed to lead the resettlement team in autumn 2024. Also in 2024, resettlement staff started working in specific probation delivery unit (PDU) areas. This change has enabled them to develop stronger working relationships with community colleagues, improving the support provided to men after their release.

7.5.3 The employment and release board meets weekly to ensure pre-release planning is coordinated, with strong agency partnerships with key agencies, including the Department of Work and Pensions, Working Wales, Resettlement, Probation, Dyfodol and healthcare services present. A presentation is delivered in advance, which outlines who will be present and what information prisoners can expect to receive. This has proved to be very useful and allows prisoners to prepare in advance and bring any questions they may have.

7.5.4 The resettlement team holds forums for young adults and care leavers, offering targeted support and helping to build resilience within this group. A money-management course commenced in January 2025, with young adults given priority for admission. Stress and anxiety groups were also identified as being essential. The

team has established contact with Route 16, the Neath Port Talbot leaving-care service for young people aged 14-25. Links are also being developed with The Rees Foundation, a charity offering support to those with care experience.

7.5.5 Sourcing sustainable accommodation for prisoners on release continues to be extremely challenging. Commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) providers, the Forward Trust and St Giles Trust, work to ensure accommodation is available for those leaving custody. The early release scheme has made this very difficult, with some men being released without accommodation.

7.5.6 Sadly, during this reporting period, a gentleman died five days after being released without accommodation. The PPO was highly critical of the prison's resettlement process, citing '*confusion over who was making the referral.*' As detailed in section 4.2.3 of this report, policies and protocols have been revised and the recommendations made in the PPO report have been addressed to help ensure this does not happen again.

7.5.7 The regional housing specialist collates relevant data and provides the prison with monthly accommodation statistics. Data recorded includes the proportion of individuals housed on the first night following prison release. A snapshot from November 2024 showed that 84.61% of prisoners released that month had secured first-night accommodation (14% in private rental; 44% with family or friends; and 41% in social rented accommodation). In a similar snapshot from December 2024, 76.74% of those released had accommodation on their first night.

7.5.8 The Spend to Save pilot was implemented during the reporting period, with Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr and Newport local authorities working alongside the regional housing specialist (RHO) to explore ways of maintaining tenancies for sentenced prisoners. The resettlement team at HMP Swansea identifies men with tenancies in these areas and provides the necessary information to the RHO, who will then liaise with the relevant local authority when the referral form is signed off. Disappointingly, Swansea local authority has not engaged with this pilot to date.

7.5.9 Links have been developed with Fighting Homelessness CIC (community interest company), and a member of their team has attended awareness-raising events in the establishment. In addition, a member of the chaplaincy team has made some positive links with local churches and organisations, which have offered practical support such as rucksacks and sleeping bags, as well as some ongoing support post-release.

Employment on release

7.5.10 The employment hub has established a strong partnership with the regional learning and skills partnership (RLSP) and is working collaboratively to drive regional economic growth and employment opportunities (see 7.1 for more details).

7.5.11 Two prison work coaches from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are based in the establishment. They are available to answer any queries the men may have about benefits on release and actively try to change mindsets that 'if you are on benefits, then you cannot work'. One work coach is based in the employment hub five days a week and plays a vital role in identifying men who are eligible and ready for any employment courses running in the prison.

7.5.12 A Working Wales careers adviser attends the prison four days a week. One-to-one conversations take place with the men, discussing their aspirations, what skills they have, previous job history and the training they could receive through ReAct+ (a support programme designed to help people return to work quickly by removing barriers to employment) funding that would help them secure employment on release. A sample of the data shows that, during August 2024, Working Wales supported 68 prisoners. HMP Swansea was the first prison to trial ReAct+ funding, and it has been so successful, it has been rolled out to all Welsh prisoners.

7.5.13 Business Wales delivers a self-employment workshop at HMP Swansea on a bi-monthly basis, providing prisoners with comprehensive information and guidance to help them pursue self-employment on release.

7.5.14 Employers attend the prison on a monthly basis to interview work-ready candidates whilst they are still in custody, to hopefully secure an immediate start in employment on release. The prison has strong working relationships with Acorn Recruitment, BMSL, Castell Howell, Regimental Cleaning, Iceland, TUI and Dutch Quarters.

7.5.15 The employment advisory board is a multi-agency forum that is held bi-monthly to explore strategies for improving employment outcomes at HMP Swansea. The board brings together representatives from various departments within the establishment, alongside external employers and key stakeholders.

7.5.16 Data during the reporting period show that course completion rates and post-prison employment success rates for prisoners released from HMP Swansea have improved. The DWP is also working closely with the employment hub to ensure prison leavers receive appropriate support in reception on the day of their release.

8. The work of the IMB

8.1 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	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	389

8.2 Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year ⁶	Current reporting period ⁷
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	6
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	12	17
C	Equality	0	2
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	4	12
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	5	14
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	9	4
F	Food and kitchens	1	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	22	29
H1	Property within the establishment	11	7
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	3	16
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	5	7
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	15	11
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	25	19
K	Transfers	1	3
L	Miscellaneous	3	17
	Total number of applications	118	164

⁶ Previous reporting year: November 2022 to October 2023.

⁷ Current reporting period: November 2023 to April 2025.



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