



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Guys Marsh

**For reporting year
1 December 2024 to 30 November 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 (OPCAT) is an international treaty that protects people deprived of their liberty through regular independent inspections of detention settings. It requires states to appoint a National Preventive Mechanism to monitor conditions, safeguard detainees, and prevent ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism.

Description of the establishment

HMP Guys Marsh is a category C adult male training and resettlement prison located two miles south of Shaftesbury in rural Dorset. In the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, it was categorised as Performance Level 1: Performance of serious concern¹.

The operating capacity at the end of the reporting year was 511², with a temporary reduction for ongoing improvement works. The operating capacity is the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order or the proper running of the planned regime. Daily unlock was in the region of 490.

The prison expansion programme, which had got under way in early 2022, came to a halt when the prime contractor, ISG, went into administration in the middle of September 2024, and a new contractor, Kier, was chosen to resume the project in early 2025. At the end of the reporting year, Kier had three months to conduct their own surveys for re-pricing of the contract that was awarded to ISG over four years ago. The new build will accommodate a further 180 prisoners, as well as providing additional employment and recreational facilities for the whole establishment.

Pending re-pricing and business case approval, Guys Marsh and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) identified early works - such as the sports pitch, fencing, control and restraint (C&R) equipment cabin, potential houseblock works and a healthcare extension - to start soon after the final build contract is approved.

The project to replace the district heating main, awarded to Kier, remained separate, although the MoJ was considering including it in the wider expansion programme.

The campus-style layout had, at the beginning of the reporting year, eight residential wings. A large, modern block incorporates the education area, chaplaincy rooms, the library and the healthcare department.

There is a small range of workshops suitable for industries and land-based activities, including horticulture and grounds maintenance.

The visitors' centre lies just outside the perimeter fence. The regional learning centre is located near the entrance to the site. The area outside the perimeter fence, which encompasses car parks and access roads, is permanently untidy, with discarded rubbish and leaves. It offers a poor first impression to the visitor, notwithstanding some efforts to brighten up the main entrance to the prison.

¹ The Annual Prison Performance Ratings are derived from the Prison Performance Tool Dashboard (PPTD), reflecting performance between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

² 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

The HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) January 2025 unannounced inspection of HMP Guys Marsh reflected the Board's concerns about safety, staff-prisoner relationships and purposeful activity³.

The Board recognised the Governor's efforts to improve standards, reflected in HMIP's November 2025 independent review of progress (IRP) findings⁴ of reduced violence, a more consistent regime and better staff and prisoner relationships, while agreeing that illicit drugs remain a serious threat to safety and stability.

Weak leadership remained a concern, especially on some wings where inexperienced staff lacked direction. Although managerial presence was still inconsistent, it had improved. The Board hoped that Project Enable (a management and workforce development initiative aimed at improving leadership, capability, and culture in prisons) and better training would help, despite the constraints of existing shift patterns.

Senior management team (SMT) meetings continued to present extensive statistics, but it was not always clear to IMB observers at the meetings that these translated into objective analysis or solutions, with the emphasis often appearing more focused on process than outcomes for prisoners.

Safety

- The levels of violence and self-harm reduced markedly from the previous year.
- The safety team was reinforced and became more focused.
- Illicit items (drugs, phones, etc) remained a serious threat.
- There were high levels of prisoners under the influence (UTI) of psychoactive substances, particularly in August.

Fair and humane treatment

- Although the complaints process had begun to improve towards the end of the previous reporting year, it deteriorated again during the first three months of the new reporting year. The system became disorganised and ineffective, and it did not fully recover before the end of the reporting period.
- Residential accommodation improved towards the end of the reporting year, with some repairs carried out and a decency strategy implemented.
- The limited system of key working continued and appeared to be successful.

Health and wellbeing

- The physical environment remained unsuitable.

³ Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Guys Marsh by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 6 to 16 January 2025, dated April 15, 2025.

⁴ HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Guys Marsh, 3 to 5 November 2025, dated 8 December 2025.

- High volume of emergency callouts and substance misuse.
- Missed healthcare appointments and long waiting times.
- Delays in dental care.
- High prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse, which contributed to the high staff workload.
- Coordination between healthcare and prison operations needed to improve.

Progression and resettlement

- Prison workshops provided unaccredited qualifications tailored to specific job roles, significantly boosting employability.
- The 40% reduction in funding at the changeover of education providers in October produced a reduced service to prisoners.
- A poor relationship between the education wing staff and general prison staff did not help with attendance.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- What concrete action is the Minister taking to resolve the resettlement barriers created by last-minute CAS2/CAS3 accommodation placements, which delay referrals to essential services and prevent prisoners from receiving effective employment preparation before release?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- When will enhanced gate security be installed at HMP Guys Marsh, as highlighted by HMIP's November 2025 IRP?
- In our 2024 annual report, we asked why the Prison Service retained the current, outdated and expensive system whereby prisoners are charged by the minute for phone calls. When will the outdated per-minute prison phone charging system be replaced with fairer call plans?
- The Independent Review of Prison Officer Training reported its findings in September 2022. The report outlined several key recommendations for improving the training and development of prison officers, one of which was to redesign the training model, focusing on a 12-month programme. When will the new prison officer training programme finally be introduced?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- When will the system for social video calls be fit for purpose?

3.3 Response to the previous report.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister 1. Will the Minister consider ordering an urgent review of the career management of frontline prison staff?	1. The Governor reports on a strong staffing position, with all senior roles filled and a critical safety training plan in place, which includes	1. Staffing situation stable through better management, but fragile and continues to constrain activity. Project Enable still not fully mobilised by the end of the reporting period and lacking

<p>2. What is the current vision that HMPPS is to deliver?</p>	<p>competency and capability professional development training for all staff. In addition, HMP Guys Marsh is an early adopter of the Enable programme, offering weekly coaching and reflective practice for all uniformed staff, plus targeted support for first line managers.</p> <p>2. The vision for HMPPS is to create a safer society by effectively rehabilitating offenders, reducing reoffending and protecting the public. Five strategic priorities are rehabilitation, public protection, estates and infrastructure, people and youth custody.</p>	<p>some training packages, so not yet effective.</p> <p>2. The Vision has not changed, but it is a matter for debate whether the HMPPS is effective in its rehabilitation of offenders. The Board's view is that estates and infrastructure receive no more priority than just enough, just in time.</p>
<p>To the Prison Service</p> <p>1. Will the Prison Service invest in continuous professional development for prison staff, including leadership training for SOs [supervising officers], CMs [custodial managers] and senior managers?</p>	<p>1. The Enable Programme has been launched as a workforce transformation initiative to enhance how HMPPS trains, develops, leads and supports its staff. Included are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Core capability training packages for prison officers 6-18 months into service, to build confidence, competence, and a sense of value following foundation training. b. A new custodial manager portfolio to strengthen leadership skills among first-line managers, with a similar 	<p>1. By November 2025, the Enable team had not sufficiently mobilised and there had been little intervention by the end of the reporting year. No evidence of any leadership training plans nor the custodial manager portfolio.</p>

<p>2. Why does the Prison Service retain the current, outdated and expensive system whereby prisoners are charged by the minute for phone calls?</p> <p>3. When will effective action be taken to counter the threat of drones delivering illicit items to prisoners?</p> <p>4. Will the Prison Service address the worsening state of</p>	<p>offer in development for heads of functions. c. Introduction of specialist mentoring roles to support officers' professional growth. d. Coaching and training for first-line managers through the human resources performance manager (HRPM), focused on improving performance management capability.</p> <p>2. There have been discussions around the potential introduction of more modernised payment models, such as call plans or monthly schemes, similar to those available in the community. However, these remain exploratory and have not yet been formally adopted or guaranteed.</p> <p>3. At HMP Guys Marsh, a comprehensive strategy is addressing the growing threats of drone activity, substance misuse, and site vulnerabilities, which impact the safety and wellbeing of staff and prisoners. Plus, Mk-8 windows are being installed (due to be completed in October 2025) and 400m no-fly zones are being established to prevent for drone activity.</p> <p>4. Infrastructure projects are underway or in development:</p>	<p>2. No development on more modernised phone payment models.</p> <p>3. There has been a reduction in drone flights, and the new windows have undoubtedly contributed to this success. But flights still take place and a geo-fence system has proved effective elsewhere. No sign of enhanced security at the prison entrance, as exists with other prisons in the region.</p> <p>4. The work on the ring main heating mentioned in last year's report is in the validation period</p>
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<p>repair of residential wings?</p>	<p>a. Upgrade heating ring main work to start before 2026. b. Cell-call systems in four accommodation wings.</p>	<p>and is to be subsumed into the contract for the new build in accommodation.</p>
<p>To the Governor 1. What action can be taken to address the ongoing problems with, and the delays in, maintenance and repairs?</p>	<p>1. Delays are mainly due to resource constraints, a backlog of maintenance work and the limitations of the current HMPPS maintenance policy.</p>	<p>1. Repairs are timely. The HMPPS maintenance policy remains limited.</p>

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Violence decreased and self-harm fell early in the reporting year but repeat incidents by some individuals kept numbers high. The strengthened safer custody team began meeting prisoners before safer communities meetings to share trends and gather feedback.

4.1 Reception and induction

Over the reporting period, the reception area underwent a series of significant improvements aimed at enhancing efficiency, safety and the overall experience for both staff and prisoners.

There were 28 instances of buses arriving late during the reporting period, which affected the otherwise smooth flow of service provided by reception staff and the attendant agencies within the prison. The introduction of escort checklists appeared to reduce the paperwork required for escorts, while parcel application forms were condensed to include a decency parcel option (which contains essential clothing or hygiene items). Unauthorised articles were clearly highlighted, which helped to improve transparency and compliance. Prisoners were notified when items were added to their stored property on delivery, increasing accountability.

A new reception information sheet was introduced to collect next of kin details and flag any language barriers, ensuring that the safer custody team were fully informed about new arrivals. Additionally, the Listeners' (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide peer support) contact numbers were added to prisoners' ID cards, giving them easier access to support without needing to ask.

From our observations, bulk storage at the back of reception was eventually cleared, eliminating clutter and making the area more efficient and pleasant. The front reception area was also tidied, benefiting both staff and prisoners. A designated induction room provided a private space for new arrivals, supporting a smoother transition.

Shop orders were recorded on property cards (which list prisoners' personal items), reducing issues that arose during cell clearances. The release chart ensured all areas confirmed when a prisoner had been seen, reducing the risk of missed steps. The 'not-for-issue' property process (which directs items that can't legally or safely be given to prisoners into a separate system for storage, return or disposal) was a step forward in cutting down the backlog of property in reception.

The introduction of a £1 charge for lost ID cards significantly appeared to reduce requests for replacements. From the Board's observations, the 'Bus to Bed' process was improved, with a whiteboard system for tracking new arrivals, ensuring all necessary steps were completed before transfer. Reception staff held a PIN (personal identification number), which is unique to each prisoner and links them to their monitored phone account on the prison's internal phone system, for cases where a prisoner's PIN had not been activated, and the phone in reception was made available for prisoner use. New arrivals were also offered a hot drink, making the reception experience more welcoming.

The X-ray body scanning process was clearly detailed for all to see, helping to ensure consistency and accuracy in its application. From 1 January to 30 November 2025, the reception area conducted a total of 702 body scans. Of these, 109 were positive and 124 were 'inconclusive'. The monthly breakdown revealed a steady increase in scans, peaking in October, with 148 scans, 41 of which were positive.

The state of first-night cells was improved, but staff shortages made for an inconsistent delivery of some of the processes associated with induction (e.g. key working).

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There were no deaths in custody during the reporting year.

The excessively high monthly figures for self-harm in 2024 declined steadily from their peak, at 108 in July of that year, to 53 at the beginning of the current reporting period, on 1 December 2025. This monthly statistic continued to drop and averaged 40 per month for the remainder of 2025. The lowest numbers were recorded in May (16) and September (17), with the highest number of incidents – 62 - appearing in March. Nevertheless, overall, this year saw a halving of the previous year's statistics.

The main method used for self-harming was cutting, and the replacement of wet-shave razors with electric razors in March did not seem to affect the determination of the most prolific self-harmers, who resorted to the use of plastic, glass, tins, etc. The reasons quoted for the self-harm by the safer custody team varied monthly, with debt and access to vapes being cited as the main drivers. Regime, wing/cell moves and conflict also featured.

The assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) processes (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) improved over the year, with some help from the standards coaching team⁵; the quality of documentation and case reviews improved and the introduction of an ACCT 'quick fix' checklist made the process more 'user-friendly'. Nevertheless, by the end of the reporting period, there were still failings, identified at SMT meetings, with some being incomplete and supervisory checks not always being fully carried out.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

By the end of the reporting period, overall violence had reduced by around one-third since the beginning of 2025 with, notably, fewer assaults on staff and assaults of a serious nature. In the Board's view, contributory factors included a more consistent regime facilitated by a more judicious deployment of staff, improved accommodation and better relationships between staff and prisoners.

Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults ran at an average of 15 per month, broken down by the safer custody team (SCT) in this period to 'fights' (61) and 'assaults' (125), the basis for which the Board found could be subjective. February saw a peak of 24 incidents, with most occurring on a Thursday, the day after canteen delivery (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials

⁵ The standards coaching team (SCT) was established in UK prisons and aimed to improve safety, decency and operational effectiveness in some of the most challenging prison environments. It focused on enhancing the skills and confidence of prison staff.

using their allocated funds) was issued and on which debt was paid. The SCT called for all those involved, both perpetrator and victim, to be referred to challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIP) in order to determine whether the full CSIP process should be followed. CSIPs are used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence.

CSIP investigations need to be completed within 72 hours of being allocated to a CSIP manager. Of the 61 CSIPs that went to investigation, 25 were not completed on time. Inconsistent quality and follow up of CSIPs were recognised by the SCT as weak points, although oversight did appear to improve as the year progressed.

Assaults on staff saw a decrease from 146 in 2024 to 82 in 2025 - an average of seven per month. The care and separation Unit (CSU), where prisoners are kept apart from the rest of the prison population, experienced the highest number of incidents, with 14 of all the assaults classed as serious.

According to the SCT, the majority of prisoners who self-isolated did so because they were in debt and/or felt threatened by other prisoners. There was a running average of 12 self-isolators, with a steady climb in numbers from the beginning of the reporting period, tailing off as the year ended. The SCT held a number of successful isolator coffee mornings and the SCT custodial manager conducted management checks every two weeks. The Board was pleased to note that daily case notes were getting better on the wings and safety representatives⁶ conducted weekly checks on all self-isolators. The most frequent concerns raised with safety reps were mental health and wing moves or transfers to another prison.

4.4 Use of force

The SCT held a monthly multidisciplinary meeting to review use of force (UoF) incidents, to identify trends and patterns and to try to take forward appropriate actions to address them. There was also a weekly assurance meeting to review the previous week's incidents in order to learn lessons.

The year saw a significant decrease in UoF incidents compared with 2024, when the monthly average was 72. In 2025, the monthly average was 54, representing a drop of 216 incidents. Of the total 650 incidents in 2025, only 58 were planned, suggesting to the SCT that incidents were planned where the situation allowed. The Board accepted that not all of these incidents would have necessitated the full use of force and that guiding holds were included in these figures.

The SCT attributed the decrease to the impact of strategies such as conflict resolution and Enable⁷ team training packages, and the Board was pleased to see that lessons were being identified from monthly statistical information. However, the core capability packages were yet to be fully delivered by the Enable team.

The greatest driver for incidents involving force was the refusal to locate - a consistent theme for the past two years - followed by assaults.

⁶ Safety representatives are prisoners offering peer support to self-isolators and others.

⁷ Project Enable is an initiative aimed at transforming how prison officers are trained and supported in the UK. This programme addresses critical issues within the, including staffing challenges and the need for a more professional and effective workforce.

The Board was generally encouraged by the performance of the staff in managing planned UoF, where careful and thorough briefing almost always seemed to result in a textbook exercise involving minimum force. Having been poor in the previous reporting period, the delivery of post-incident debriefs to prisoners improved markedly from May onwards.

Only 76.6% of UoF incidents were captured on body worn video cameras (BWVCs), a slight improvement on 2024 (70%) but not the increase the Board would have hoped for. Nevertheless, scenario-based training was held and courses promoted the use of BWVCs and de-escalation techniques.

Pava incapacitant spray was drawn 11 times but used on only three occasions. Batons were drawn on five occasions but not used.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Illicit drugs remained a serious and persistent threat to the safety and stability of HMP Guys Marsh, despite the best efforts of the staff to reduce supply, with new cell windows to deter drones, enhanced screening of mail and increased searching of cells and staff.

The Board was told by the Governor that an absence of hard drugs in the summer had resulted in a spike of prisoners under the influence (UTI) of psychoactive substances (PS). The Board noted that there were over 300 cases in the month of August alone, including some in the care and separation unit (CSU) and the recovery wing.

During the reporting year, a new style of vape pen was introduced in the hope that it would curb the smoking of PS. Although it made this more difficult, an officer explained to the Board that the new vape pens could still be used for this purpose.

Mandatory drug testing (MDT) was reintroduced early in the year and produced a positive test rate of 41%, which was among the highest in category C prisons.

During the reporting year, the following items were seized from prisoners:

- 105 mobile phones
- 129 weapons
- 665 illegal drugs
- 1155 litres of illegally brewed alcohol ('hooch')

In addition, there were throw-over and drone incidents and staff are to be congratulated on their eagerness and effectiveness in foiling such attempts.

The Board remains disappointed that enhanced security at the prison access gate is still not in place, unlike at other prisons in the region. While some random searching of staff did take place, the Board believed that enhanced security of access to the prison was an essential prerequisite to reduce the availability of illicit items.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

At the start of the reporting year, the prison's accommodation consisted of six main residential wings: Anglia, Cambria, Dorset, Mercia, Gwent and Saxon. Two additional wings, Jubilee and Rainbow, housed prisoners on the highest (enhanced) level of the incentives scheme, which rewards good behaviour.

The Board noted some improvements to the physical environment compared with the previous year, particularly following inspection findings earlier in the year. Outdoor areas were better maintained and no longer covered in litter. This was partly due to the installation of new windows, which prevented rubbish being thrown out, and to a daily effort to clear litter.

Conditions inside the residential wings also showed some improvement. Shower rooms were fitted with extractor fans, although many were not fully effective and problems with damp and mould continued. Wings were repainted, and the central store for the issue of items of personal hygiene (shampoo, soap, toilet paper) was replaced with individual supply cupboards on each wing, allowing quicker access to basic items. However, these cupboards were not always properly restocked.

A positive change was the introduction of curtains in all cells, which improved privacy and removed the need for prisoners to improvise with blankets or towels. The induction unit was also improved, and first-night cells were presented to a good standard, in the Board's view.

Cleaning standards appeared to be strengthened through the introduction of weekly inspections by supervising officers and monthly checks by custodial managers. The Board welcomed these measures and will continue to monitor how consistently they are applied.

Despite these improvements, the Board received more complaints about accommodation than in the previous year: 61 compared with 41. In particular, the older wings (Anglia, Cambria, Dorset and Mercia) remain in a poor physical condition. The Board's view is that, because of their age and deterioration, they still fall short of the clean and decent environment that should be expected in a prison.

A vermin problem highlighted in the previous report was resolved, largely due to the installation of new windows and improved pest-control measures.

Food continued to be an important and frequently discussed issue. Lunchtime meals - typically baguettes, soup and salads - attracted criticism for being small in portion size and limited in content. While steps were taken to address this, there were occasions when the quantity delivered to the wings was not sufficient for the number of prisoners. Food recycling was introduced in the spring and appeared to be working as effectively as circumstances allowed.

The prison kitchen faced a number of technical issues with equipment during the year, which affected food production. The Board recognised the efforts of the kitchen staff in managing these challenges. However, the discovery of rats in the kitchen in September was concerning, although the issue was dealt with quickly.

5.2 Segregation

The care and separation unit (CSU) is a small, self-contained area of the prison with 12 cells, although two are sometimes out of use because of damage. There are also two special cells for prisoners whose behaviour or medical needs require closer supervision.

The CSU is mainly used for prisoners who have been given a punishment of cellular confinement following a disciplinary hearing. It is also used for prisoners involved in violence, threats, refusing to move location, or causing damage, as well as those waiting for a hearing. Prisoners held in the CSU lose certain privileges, such as access to television and the prison shop.

The Board observed that one of the challenges of the CSU is its underlying purpose. While it is intended to provide care and close supervision when needed, in practice it often acts as a way of managing instability elsewhere in the prison - effectively relieving pressure on the main wings rather than operating solely as a last-resort care setting.

The unit itself was kept clean and well maintained. Damage was repaired quickly, and the general standard of cleanliness reflects well on both staff and prisoner orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison). In September, in-cell phones were installed, improving privacy for those held there. Although there is a defined daily routine, including showers and exercise, this is sometimes disrupted by operational delays elsewhere in the prison.

The CSU is reviewed every three months by the segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG). Its stated aims are to return prisoners to normal accommodation as soon as possible, ensure they are treated fairly and decently, and prevent them from being held in segregation longer than necessary.

Between January and October, 216 prisoners were placed in the CSU. Most stayed for no more than 72 hours at a time. However, the Board was concerned to learn that 33 of these prisoners were not given a full search on arrival. Most of these cases occurred between August and October, a period when the Board found that some prisoners in the unit were under the influence of drugs on several occasions.

In 24 cases, a required safety assessment was not completed within the mandatory two-hour period. One prisoner was held against medical advice because of repeated attempts to take his own life.

Thirty-four prisoners arrived at the CSU already subject to an open ACCT (assessment, care in custody and teamwork) plan, which is used to support prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide. A further 33 ACCT plans were opened during prisoners' stays. Neurodiverse prisoners continued to be consistently over-represented in the unit, with between 21 and 25 placed in segregation each quarter. Their behaviour was often linked to difficulties managing emotions and processing instructions.

After 72 hours in the CSU, each prisoner had a reintegration plan put in place. These plans were reviewed every 14 days and sent to the regional team for oversight. Forty-seven prisoners were transferred to other prisons following their time in the CSU. Transfers often followed longer stays or difficulties in safely returning prisoners

to the main wings. This reinforced concerns that the CSU was sometimes being used as a staging post for transfer rather than purely for short-term separation. Earlier in the year, both the Board and the safer custody team were concerned that some prisoners were using the CSU as a way to secure a transfer out of the prison.

Six prisoners were held in the CSU for more than 42 days (the limit allowed without external authorisation). These extended stays were due to a combination of system delays, difficulties arranging transfers, refusal of transfer by the receiving prison, and ongoing behavioural concerns.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The work of the standards coaching team (February to May) was noticeably effective but only addressed low-level skills and practices that should have been covered in initial training. The setting up of the Project Enable team, led by a custodial manager was welcomed by the B. However, at the end of the reporting period, in November, it had not fully mobilised and remained a work in progress.

Weak performance management continued to affect morale among frontline staff. Although attendance improved, staffing remained fragile: 98 band 3 officers were in post against a requirement of 125, with 25% non-effective, leaving 73 available for duty. A high proportion were inexperienced, and the HMIP inspection in November noted that many managers still lacked confidence and experience.

The Board was concerned by a rise in prisoners' allegations of staff bullying, often involving the same small number of officers. This behaviour appeared to heighten tensions on the wings. The Governor was aware, and it was reassuring that some staff were suspended or dismissed where misconduct was evidenced.

The key worker sessions set up by the Governor for the top 40 prisoners most in need continued once a week, with the list being updated monthly. The remainder, seen as less critical cases, saw their key worker once a month.

The Board continued to view the cohort of prison officers from Commonwealth countries as a success. However, July's immigration rule changes, raising the skilled worker salary threshold to £41,700, risk undermining prison staffing, prompting representations to the Home Office to seek an exemption for prison officers.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The equality and diversity position remained unfilled for a number of months following the departure of the previous lead at the end of the last reporting period. Since then, the role has changed hands twice, with gaps in between appointments.

Fortunately, the head of safety provided some continuity for these periods, but there is scarce information on the subject except to report that there were 34 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) submitted in 2025. A sample (10%) of DIRFs should have been independently checked for quality of response using a national template and outlying metric outcomes flagged to the Prison Group Director. The Board saw no evidence of this.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The IMB regularly saw the chaplains in the CSU and out and about on the wings. All new arrivals were seen by a member of the multi-faith team. The department

supported prisoners with family issues, such as a bereavement. The IMB considered that all religious and cultural belief needs were being met. Religious services, including Friday prayers for Muslim prisoners, were well attended. The main Christian chapel was in excellent condition and hosted regular services and events, including Changing Tunes and dependency groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. The multi-faith room however remained in a state of disrepair and continued to leak throughout the year. The Board continued to raise this matter with the Governor.

Dietary provision on religious grounds appeared to have been catered for and religious festivals were celebrated. The year saw the completion of the serenity garden, which was largely the work of one individual prisoner. This impressive facility offered a place of quiet reflection and hosted Christenings and a wedding ceremony.

In December 2024, a memorial, constructed by prisoners, was dedicated in remembrance of Far East prisoners of war. Built in 1938, Guys Marsh was a 600-bed British and United States military hospital throughout WW2. After the war and until 1952, the hospital acted as a rehabilitation hospital for prisoners of war returning from the Far East, who often suffered from severe physical and psychological trauma. The service was well attended by families and representatives from across Armed Services charities.

From its observations, the Board believed that the department continued to provide an excellent service to those of all faiths and those of no faith.

5.6 Incentives schemes

The Board reported comprehensively on the incentives schemes in last year's report, and the measures introduced by the Governor remained in place and were successful. The amount of association among those prisoners of the enhanced level of the incentives scheme was increased and there was a growing list of hopeful applicants to the two wings that catered exclusively for enhanced prisoners. The pod accommodation wing was also upgraded by being 'winterised', meaning it was better insulated and made more weather-proof so it could be used comfortably during colder conditions

A review of a prisoner's incentives level should be conducted when an incident arises that might affect his status. However, the Board was told by some prisoners that they were not always informed when they had received a 'negative entry' for their behaviour, nor what that meant for their status.

The Board noted that the Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) Policy document revised, but originating from 2018, needed updating.

5.7 Complaints

The complaints process, having regained some effectiveness at the end of the previous reporting period, fell into disarray in the first three months of the new year. It was only in April, when the new manager of the business hub put it on to a stable footing, that things began to improve – only for it to unravel again over the summer due to staff shortages and incompetence. At the end of the reporting period, the clerk resigned after only a few months in post, thereby creating a further shortage of staff and the complaints desk unmanned. Because of the breaks in continuity, the Board was unable to obtain an accurate assessment of what the majority of complaints

were about; however, complaints about accommodation featured most in those received after April 2025.

5.8 Property

There were 33 applications (prisoners' written representations) to the Board concerning property lost at Guys marsh - up from the previous period's figure of 15. Applications for help with property lost on transfer into the prison soared to 142, compared with last year's figure of 67.

A new national cell clearance form and best practice guide were introduced, but the removal of photographic records and limited recording of additional property concerned some staff. The Board shared the view of some SMT members that cell clearances were still not consistently thorough, as was highlighted by an incident where prisoners were placed into an uncleared cell, leading to lost property and compensation.

During the year, a total of £2147.50 was paid in compensation for property lost at Guys Marsh, although it was admitted by the business hub that this was not a true reflection of the value of the property lost. Property acquired - legally or illegally - over a prisoner's stay in prison was not recorded on the property card and therefore was not counted; the value of individual items was 'capped' at £50; and an arbitrary sum was paid, depending on the item's supposed age and condition. In addition, when prisoners were transferred or released, the compensation claim was dropped and many other prisoners did not bother to claim because of the convoluted and lengthy process involved.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

At the end of November, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust completed the third year of its seven-year contract to provide healthcare services at the prison.

In the Board's view, communication between the head of healthcare and the prison's senior management team remained strong. There were daily meetings with senior leaders, weekly meetings with the Deputy Governor, and quarterly local quality delivery board (LQDB) meetings, chaired by the Governor; the latter attended by a Board member. In November, it was agreed that additional monthly LQDB meetings would be introduced to focus on short-term priorities that could be addressed more quickly.

Healthcare services continued to be reviewed through regular NHS England quality audits. As in the previous year, concerns remain about the physical environment of the healthcare facilities, particularly the pharmacy and patient waiting areas. The healthcare provider told us they continue to consider these spaces unsuitable for maintaining safety and proper infection-control standards. However, resolving these issues is outside the direct control of the healthcare team, as improvements depend on a funded new-build programme.

Overall, healthcare staffing levels appeared stable, with no vacancies in November of the reporting year. A permanent GP was available three days a week, supported by a full-time nurse practitioner. Psychiatric services were provided by a locum (temporary) psychiatrist who travels from Birmingham.

Healthcare staff continued to play an active role in supporting prisoners in the CSU, attending daily to see those held there and contributing to ACCT reviews for prisoners at risk of self-harm. They also attended planned use of force incidents, including enforced cell moves, to provide medical oversight.

Under the terms of the contract, healthcare services operated seven days a week, from 7.30am to 5.30pm, with reduced staffing levels at weekends. Outside these hours, the NHS 111 phone service was frequently used to provide additional support.

6.2 Physical healthcare

The number of medical emergencies remained high throughout the year. There were typically more than 100 emergency callouts each month, amounting to 1,784 over the year. Many of these incidents were linked to prisoners being under the influence of drugs or to self-harm.

Since formal welfare logs on the wings are no longer kept, it has not been possible to accurately measure how many prisoners are using illicit drugs or are dependent on alcohol. However, the charity, Change, Grow, Live (CGL), reported a noticeable decrease in the number of alcohol-dependent prisoners arriving at the prison compared with the previous year. In the latter part of the reporting period, most prisoners found to be under the influence were affected by drugs rather than alcohol.

Healthcare forums on the wings, which had been paused the previous year, were reintroduced. Healthcare staff also resumed attendance at prisoner council meetings.

The local NHS ambulance service continued to respond promptly when called. Most external hospital appointments took place at Salisbury or Yeovil District Hospitals, depending on medical need. Outpatient appointments remained frequent, averaging around two each weekday.

Some prisoners continued to miss their medical appointments, although the number was slightly lower than in the previous year. In November, for example, 13% of all appointments - including GP, nursing, dental and mental health appointments - were not attended. This had a knock-on effect, increasing waiting times for other prisoners. There were still no effective sanctions or incentives in place to address repeated non-attendance.

Complaints about healthcare were recorded as 'queries' and averaged around five per month. Most related to prescriptions being stopped, often because prisoners were found to be hiding or misusing medication, or to rules requiring prisoners to take medication as prescribed, which are in place to reduce misuse and trafficking.

There was some improvement in waiting times and fewer cancellations of appointments, including faster access to urgent treatment. This was largely because the prison was able to provide more escorts to accompany prisoners to hospital appointments. Although waiting times improved, they remained longer than ideal. In November 2025, the average wait for a GP appointment was 28 days, compared with 56 days the previous November.

However, the reintroduction of twice-daily headcounts appeared to cause disruption. When we were able to observe, the newly introduced morning roll check began at 9.30am and, on some days, took up to two hours or was abandoned altogether. During this time, prisoner movement around the prison was halted, which led to early morning medical appointments being missed. The recruitment of a full-time porter within healthcare improved the process of escorting prisoners to and from appointments, helping to reduce delays.

Dental services continued under a sub-contract arrangement, with a dentist attending three days a week. Waiting times for routine dental treatment remained high, averaging around 50 days. This was partly due to missed appointments. Urgent dental cases, however, were seen promptly.

At the request of NHS England, a study was carried out to assess the feasibility of offering flu vaccinations. Other screening programmes as part of BAU took place including bowel screening & retinal eye screening & blood-borne virus screening. Nurse-led clinics continued regularly, covering areas such as diabetes, asthma, sexual health, routine vaccinations, general health checks, pre-release health planning and antipsychotic medication reviews.

During the year, two prisoners required hospital stays of more than one week, and in one case more than four weeks. Healthcare staff visited them regularly to monitor their wellbeing.

6.3 Mental health

Mental health services improved significantly during the year, both in how quickly prisoners were seen and in the range of support available. By the end of the reporting period, the mental health team consisted of a senior manager who was a registered mental health nurse, responsible for overseeing care for prisoners with

complex mental health needs, alongside three experienced nurses. These included specialists in neurodiversity and learning disabilities, supporting prisoners with conditions such as autism, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), brain injury and dementia. The team was supported by a mental health support worker.

From our observations, prisoners needing urgent mental health care were usually seen within 48 hours. For routine referrals, initial assessments typically took between one and two weeks. Many urgent cases were identified and managed through the prison's suicide and self-harm monitoring process. Waiting times to see a consultant psychiatrist were around 16 days, which was an improvement on the previous year. The consultant psychiatrist ran a clinic at the prison one day a week.

Caseloads generally seemed to be manageable, with mental health nurses typically supporting between 15 and 20 prisoners at a time, although this rose sharply to 44 in November. The specialist nurse supporting neurodiverse prisoners worked with a smaller group of around five individuals, reflecting the more intensive support they required.

A small psychology team was in place, made up of a clinical psychologist, a counsellor and an assistant psychologist. The waiting time for an initial psychology assessment was usually about 17 days. Mental health and psychology staff appeared to work closely together, sharing information and jointly planning care. The Board was told that prisoners' needs were discussed at regular meetings, and treatment plans were agreed collectively, helping to ensure more coordinated support.

A number of group programmes were delivered during the year, alongside regular staff forums that helped identify emerging issues and informed future group work.

Prisoners were also offered one-to-one therapies, including talking therapies that help people understand and manage their thoughts, emotions and behaviour, as well as therapies designed to support people who experience intense emotions or have been affected by trauma. Counselling was available for those experiencing anxiety, depression, or issues related to substance misuse. Specialist therapies were also provided to help prisoners address long-standing patterns of unhelpful behaviour, process traumatic experiences, and cope with complex grief.

From the Board's observations, crisis support was generally comprehensive and involved close coordination with prison staff to ensure that care plans were in place and that prisoners received appropriate support at times of acute need.

6.4 Social care

Interaction with social care was led by the flow discharge coordinator. However, due to the complex needs of some prisoners, the mental health team often supported.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Noticeable, effective adjustments appeared to have been made to the regime at the end of the previous reporting period. Gym timings were adjusted to allow prisoners to attend education, skills and work and still take part in a meaningful gym schedule.

The reintroduction of the system of roll checks towards the end of the year was not successfully conducted, with staff seemingly unable to keep a tally on the whereabouts of their charges. This meant that roll check often took up to two hours

or more to complete, with obvious negative impacts on prisoners' ability to attend appointments with the offender management unit (OMU), healthcare or other services during the working day. It was clear to the Board that this caused considerable frustration and resentment, and the situation remained at the close of the reporting year.

The Board also had concerns regarding the lateness of the daily unlock following the regime change implemented in September and October.

Prior to the regime change, self-isolating medication rounds were typically started at around 7.35-7.45am. Even by late November, self-isolator medication routinely started at around 8.00-8.05am, resulting in delayed unlocks across the general estate, and prisoners were frequently not being unlocked until approximately 8.35am. The impact of this delay was significant. Prisoners were expected to eat, shower and prepare for work, education, gym, and other activities within a 20-25-minute timeframe. The IMB considered this to be unrealistic and unachievable and, as a result, prisoners were being recorded as late and issued negative reports for matters that were beyond their control. This issue was raised with the Governor on two occasions; however, the situation had not improved by the end of November.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Services have been provided by Change, Grow, Live (CGL) since 1 December 2022. CGL is a voluntary sector organisation, specialising in substance misuse and criminal justice intervention projects. All of its funding is statutory based.

There was a staff of 11 in total at the beginning of the year, which fell to nine towards the end of the reporting period due to a budget cut, leaving:

- a manager
- three recovery workers
- one family worker
- one 'through the gate' worker (who supports prisoners before release and helps them access essential services in the community afterwards)
- one programme worker
- two administrators

The cut of a recovery worker and a programme worker, together with the marked increase in the number of prisoner arrivals in Guys Marsh, has significantly increased CGL's workload

Prisoners were usually seen in the induction wing within 24 hours of arrival at Guys Marsh and offered support, which was voluntary. If the offer was taken up, the prisoner was allocated a caseworker, who conducted an assessment and formulated an intervention plan. Any required medication programmes were administered by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. If support was refused, CGL operated an 'open door' approach. CGL worked closely with the mental health team. Any prisoners found to be UTI at any time were seen again.

Rehabilitation interventions were delivered on a group work basis in an incentivised substance-free accommodation wing, dedicated to drugs and alcohol rehabilitation work. The interventions were predicated on a drug specific and/or emotion specific basis. Group work continued to be delivered daily, which included from time to time, community-based events, sports events, music therapy and quizzes. There were

three 'fellowship' groups within the programme: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Cocaine Anonymous (CA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA). A programme of talks was delivered by visiting speakers, to include a talk on restorative justice. The Literacy Trust visited on a regular basis to work with prisoners in improving literacy and developing creative writing skills. All prisoners, irrespective of whether or not in the programme, appeared to be supported pre-release.

CGL liaised regularly with various community-based teams outside of prison, to include family services.

The caseload was approximately half the prisoner population throughout the year. In November, for example, 236 prisoners were engaged with CGL. During that time, they delivered 934 one-to-one sessions and 23 group sessions; 56 prisoners successfully completed treatment programmes; and 50 prisoners were trained in the administration of naloxone (medication that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose). Prisoners are trained to administer naloxone at some point, which averages out at 50 per month. Approximately 50% of the prisoner population had drug and/or alcohol related issues. This compares with just 0.50% of the UK adult population known to have been receiving treatment for drugs and/or alcohol dependency in 2024-2025. CGL identified a marked decrease in the number of prisoners arriving in Guys Marsh presenting as alcohol dependent compared with the previous reporting period. The number of prisoners known to be using spice (a highly potent synthetic drug that imitates cannabis) in August was the highest since CGL started their work in Guys Marsh. The main drugs of choice were crack, cocaine, heroin and cannabis.

The Board previously reported on its misgivings concerning dispensing arrangements for this group, whereby medications were dispensed in full view of the prison population. The situation did not change during the year and the Board's concerns remained. A plan to erect a temporary shelter outside the dispensary, in an attempt to create privacy in the process of dispensing, existed. The Board will monitor progress.

The incidence of prisoners being found to be under the influence (UTI), through taking drugs and illicit alcohol consumption, remained high during the year. New psychoactive substances (NPS) continued to be smuggled into the prison, with a number of drone deliveries of drugs, and other contraband, intercepted. The Board viewed with alarm the number of attempted and successful drone incursions. Quantities of illicitly brewed alcohol (IBA) or 'hooch' - some substantial - were regularly found during local and dedicated search teams (DST) searches of accommodation wings. During one such DST search, over 50 litres of hooch was recovered.

NPS detectors have been in use throughout the reporting period, with varying degrees of success.

6.7 Soft skills

Further to the standard programmes delivered through the auspices of the OMU, much of the work in this area was tied to the work of CGL, as already described.

Other areas contributing to prisoner wellbeing included: continuation of an initiative in the library whereby prisoners could voice-over text from books to be sent to their children as 'bedtime reading'; regular feature film events in the library; talks by

visitors in two principle areas; the work of CGL; and monthly breakfast meetings of the small population of armed forces veterans. Charities continued to make an important contribution to the quality of visitors' days, providing a kiosk for refreshments and a play area for young children. Volunteer prison visitors continued to visit Guys Marsh, with the number of visitors set to increase following a recent round of recruitment.

Peer support of prisoners within Guys Marsh was delivered principally through Listeners and 'buddies.'

The gym remained the most popular distraction activity for prisoners. A change in the gym regime late in the previous reporting period settled down, with the balance shifted more towards prisoners who were being gainfully employed, trained and educated.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

On 1 October 2025, the contract for education, library and vocational training transferred from Weston College to Milton Keynes College. At the same time, the prison's education budget experienced a cut in real terms of 40%, bringing significant changes for both staff and prisoners.

A new Prison Education Services (PES) contract introduced by the Ministry of Justice also came into effect. Under this system, all teaching is measured strictly by the number of hours delivered, and providers face financial penalties if sessions are not completed. Staff also had to adapt to a new IT system and new ways of working. Despite these challenges, the Board believes staff managed the transition well.

Due to the effective funding cut, three education staff posts were lost. The remaining staff worked creatively to continue delivering education to prisoners. However, the prison also continued to employ a Learning Support Manager and a Head of Education, Skills and Work alongside and above the contracted teaching staff, and given the relative paucity of education opportunities, the Board felt that greater investment in classroom teachers would have offered better value to the prisoners.

By the end of the year, 10 accredited and three non-accredited courses were available - fewer than earlier in the year under the previous provider. A new 'roll-on, roll-off' system was also introduced, meaning that prisoners who completed a course were replaced immediately by new learners, while others were still working through the material. The Board was concerned that this disrupted learning, particularly for prisoners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and made it harder for teachers to maintain continuity in the classroom.

Attendance at education, skills and work improved compared with last year, and no classes were cancelled by the curriculum manager. However, overall attendance remained lower than the Board would have liked. There also appeared to be no consequences for prisoners who enrolled on a course but then withdrew without good reason.

Apart from the Head of Education, Skills and Work, members of the senior management team were not frequently seen visiting the education area. In addition, alternate Wednesday afternoons were set aside by the prison for staff training, meaning no teaching could take place at those times.

From the Board's observations, the prison library remained a valuable and well-run resource, offering a wide range of books and IT facilities, and was well used by prisoners.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Prisoners had access to a range of vocational training courses, including painting and decorating, bricklaying, forklift truck driving, land-based work and IT skills (see Annex B). Some courses were delivered by prison staff, while others were run by external organisations, including waste management and recycling providers and a Railtrack training course.

Work opportunities during the year included:

- Conservation and maintenance work
- A dismantling workshop has been replaced by an industrial cleaning workshop
- Farms and gardens, growing produce for the prison kitchens
- Electrical work, including television repair and strip-light assembly
- Electrical components assembly under a contract with Hamilton
- Laundry services for Guys Marsh and other prisons
- Textile work, preparing materials for recycling

The electrical assembly and television repair workshop provided purposeful employment, although the work could lack variety and challenge. More generally, some roles were repetitive and not mentally stimulating, but they offered prisoners a small income and a structured routine.

The Board commended workshop instructors for developing tailored, non-accredited qualifications linked to prison job roles. These structured training opportunities, particularly in areas such as TV repair and electrical assembly, were seen as a positive step in improving prisoners' employability.

7.3 Offender management, progression

At the start of the year, most of the offender management unit (OMU) moved from the main administration building onto the prison wings. This brought prisoner offender managers (POMs) closer to the prisoners they supervise, improving accessibility and day-to-day contact. From the Board's observations, the team worked well together and appeared to have a positive and supportive working environment. However, being physically separate from their head of function made it harder for POMs to seek quick advice or clarification when needed. Overall, the Board believed the move was the right decision.

Staffing levels improved during the year, reaching a full complement for a period. However, one POM subsequently left, meaning the remaining staff each carried a caseload of around 50 prisoners. There was also an ongoing backlog of OASys risk assessments, with each POM responsible for between six and nine outstanding reports.

The Board was concerned to learn that booklets previously used by POMs to help prisoners work towards parole, recategorisation and rehabilitation had been withdrawn by the Prison Service. POMs reported that these resources had been useful in supporting progression, and their removal made this work more difficult. Prisoners themselves were said to be keen for any structured support that would help them move forward.

The medium-intensity cognitive behavioural programme, Building Choices⁸, became the only accredited HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) intervention programme available at Guys Marsh. It has been well received by those who are eligible to take part, but not all prisoners meet the criteria.

The Board was disappointed that there was still no clear structure or allocated time for regular monthly meetings between POMs and prisoners. This was a frequent complaint raised by prisoners. In practice, contact usually took place three times

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmpps-accredited-programmes>.

during the first three months of custody and three times during the final three months before release.

In the final quarter of the year, there were two serious sentence calculation errors, resulting in one prisoner being released four weeks early and another 11 months late. The Governor described these mistakes as stemming from error and the complexity of sentence calculations. The Board notes that the original sentence calculations were not carried out at Guys Marsh.

7.4 Family contact

During the year, there were 4,808 social visits to prisoners. Visits took place on three days each week and were generally well organised, with any incidents handled professionally. The charity, Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), provided welcoming support for families, including activities for children. Staff searching visitors appeared courteous and were demonstrably considerate towards children and babies. A small refreshments shop was well used.

The number of social video calls fell sharply compared with last year. When first introduced, these calls were very popular, with over 1,000 booked in 2024, despite some technical problems. This year, however, the calls were moved to a less suitable location, with greater technical challenges. As a result, take-up fell significantly, with only 253 calls scheduled. Of these, 203 failed due to connection problems, equipment issues, or prisoners not attending.

The prison continued to hold themed family days throughout the year, as well as occasional events for prisoners who did not receive visits. Catering was provided either by Clink⁹ or by the prison kitchen. Parenting courses were available, along with the Storybook Dads initiative, which allows prisoners to record themselves reading a story for their children.

Phone contact was more problematic. Broken in-cell phones were sometimes left unrepaired for weeks, forcing prisoners to rely on communal phones, where privacy is limited. Although call charges were reduced by 20% from 1 April, prisoners are still charged per minute under a national contract with an external company. This remains an expensive system, particularly for calls to mobile phones. The Board continues to question why a modern call plan system, similar to those used in the community, has not yet been introduced. Although the issue was raised with the Prison Service last year and we were told that 'exploratory discussions' had taken place, no decision had been made by the middle of the reporting period.

7.5 Resettlement planning

During the reporting year, between 30 and 40 prisoners were released each month. In September, releases rose to more than 80, due to the HDC365 (home detention curfew) scheme¹⁰. The Board was pleased to see clear progress in resettlement planning at Guys Marsh, led by a small group of knowledgeable and committed staff.

⁹ The Clink Charity is a social enterprise that trains and employs people in prison to run restaurants and catering events.

¹⁰ HDC365 is a program in the UK designed to allow certain prisoners to be released from custody early, provided they have a suitable home address and can comply with specified conditions.

Links with community offender managers (COMs) in the community were generally effective. They worked closely with prison offender managers (POMs), providing written updates before regular pre-release meetings, and supported release planning. However, high caseloads sometimes limited attendance. POMs also held video handover meetings with COMs before release to ensure continuity of support.

The employment hub played a key role in preparing prisoners for release. It supported them with identification documents, bank accounts, CVs and disclosure paperwork. Those not yet ready for employment were referred to external organisations, such as the Community Foundation for Opportunity¹¹, for further help after release.

The Board was disappointed that the planned resettlement hub did not open during the year, as the space was instead allocated to Project Enable for staff training support. As a result, partner agencies had to use alternative spaces within the prison for their work.

Commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) agencies provided tailored support to prisoners, including help with accommodation, wellbeing and personal development. Their work was recorded on a national 'refer-and-monitor' system, accessible to probation teams. The pre-release team and Probation Services officers (PSOs) played a strong role in managing referrals and communication, although one PSO was covering a vacant prison employment lead (PEL) role while recruitment was ongoing.

Guys Marsh became a pilot site for the 'Work After Leaving Prison' job-matching tool, which links prisoners to vacancies with national employers. Two resettlement fairs were held during the year, with another planned for January 2026, involving 26 employers and agencies. Additional smaller events were held with companies including Kier and Greene King, helping to build employer relationships.

Accommodation on release remained a key challenge. Under the government's CU150ii measure, which tracks whether prisoners have accommodation on their first night after release, Guys Marsh achieved 93.9%, exceeding the 90% target. However, the Board was told that last-minute accommodation arrangements, particularly under national CAS2 and CAS3¹² schemes, often delayed referrals to substance misuse services and Jobcentre support. This limited job-matching opportunities and negatively affected employment outcomes. The Board understands this to be a national issue rather than one unique to Guys Marsh.

All prisoners met a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) prison work coach before release. A full-time ID and banking administrator supported prisoners in setting up bank accounts and obtaining identification. The work coach also assisted

¹¹ The Community Foundation for Opportunity is a charity that supports prison leavers by providing mentoring and employment opportunities.

¹² The Community Accommodation Service Tier 2 (CAS-2) provides housing and support for individuals on bail or home detention curfew, helping them transition to independent living. The Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS-3) offers up to 12 weeks of basic accommodation and support for those leaving prison and at risk of homelessness, aiming to reduce reoffending and improve employment outcomes.

with CVs and ensured information was shared with community work coaches for continued support after release.

The prison had a dedicated prison employment lead (PEL) who promoted job opportunities, helped prisoners prepare applications and CVs, organised interviews and engagement events with employers, and prioritised those considered 'work-ready'. Interview preparation and references were also arranged where appropriate.

Employment outcomes were positive. Within six weeks of release (by CU151ii measures), 25% of prisoners were in employment, exceeding the target of 21.36%. Within six months of release (by CU175ii measures), 37.2% were in employment, again exceeding the target of 34.71%.

Overall, while accommodation timing remains a significant national barrier, the Board recognises strong and improving work at Guys Marsh to support prisoners into employment and resettlement.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8*
Total number of visits to the establishment	383

**Of these, two are committed to only one day's monitoring per month*

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year 2024	Current reporting year 2025
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	41	61
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	20	37
C	Equality	8	66
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	4	10
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	15	27
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	21	68
F	Food and kitchens	8	21
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	48	95
H1	Property within the establishment	15	33
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	67	142
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	8	17
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	37	66
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	25	69
K	Transfers	5	9
L	Miscellaneous	43	98
	Total number of applications	365	819

Annex A

Service providers

- Building maintenance: Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL)
- Education: Weston College/Milton Keynes College (1 October)
- Escort contractor: Serco
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Mental health: Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Substance misuse programme: Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
- Visitors' centre: voluntary sector provider PACT
- Resettlement support: Footprints, Mentor ME and Catch 22 (mentoring/wellbeing); Reconnect (healthcare); Ingeus (financial debt); and Interventions Alliance (housing support)

See 7.2: Education/training courses from 1 October 2025: Milton Keynes College

- English
- Maths
- Level 2 Diploma in bricklaying
- Level 1 Extended Certificate in construction multi-skills
- Level 1 Diploma in painting and decorating
- Health and Safety in Construction skills (CSCS)
- Forklift truck operating
- Hospitality (winter only)
- Horticulture (summer only)
- Preparation for release
- IT discovery (non-accredited)
- Level 2 in digital graphics
- Creative arts (non-accredited)
- Level 2 Mentoring

Independent providers

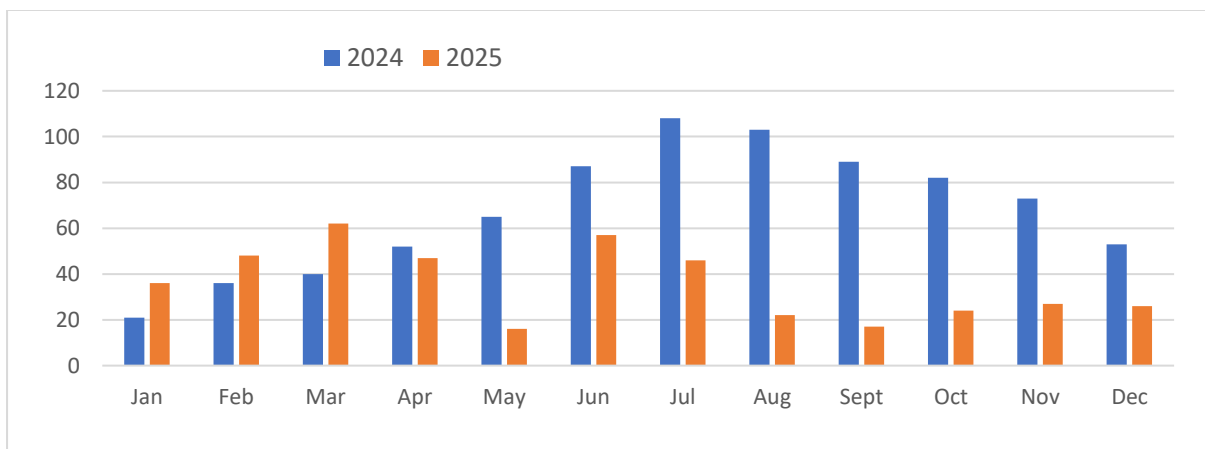
- Railtrack
- Levels 1 and 2 Waste management recycling

Annex B

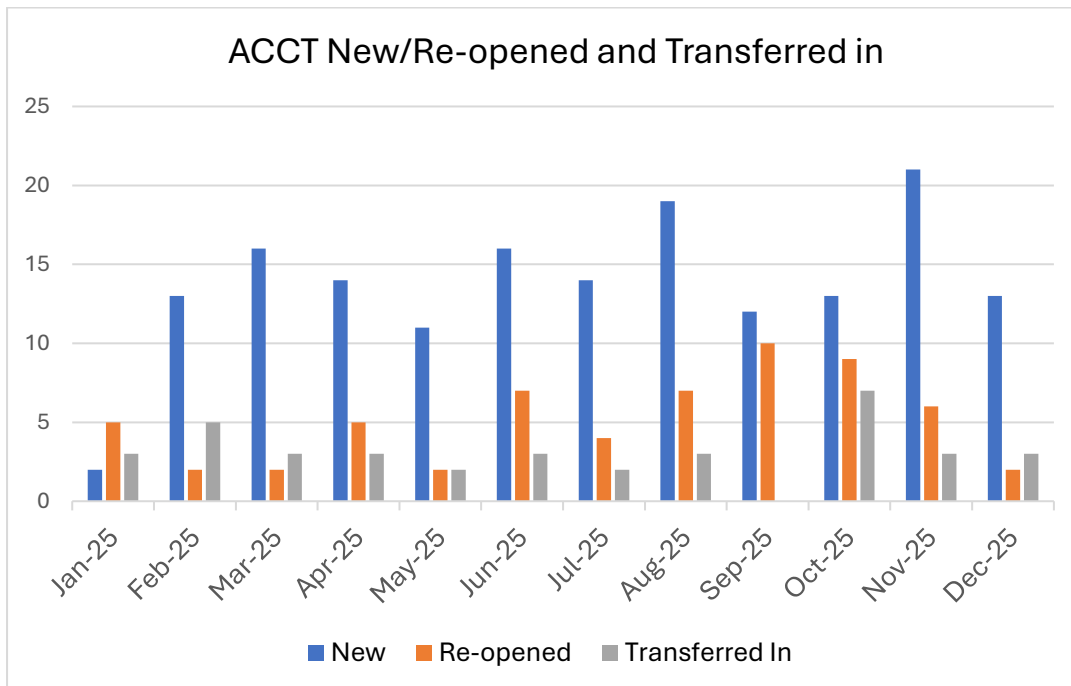
The number of calls made to the safer communities team by prisoners' families, logged by month, showed a decrease from the previous year, probably reflecting improvements in safety:

Month	2024	2025
Jan	5	43
Feb	20	28
Mar	21	9
Apr	19	8
May	34	11
Jun	39	9
Jul	26	6
Aug	17	6
Sep	22	31
Oct	33	15
Nov	13	8
Dec	0	10
Total	249	184

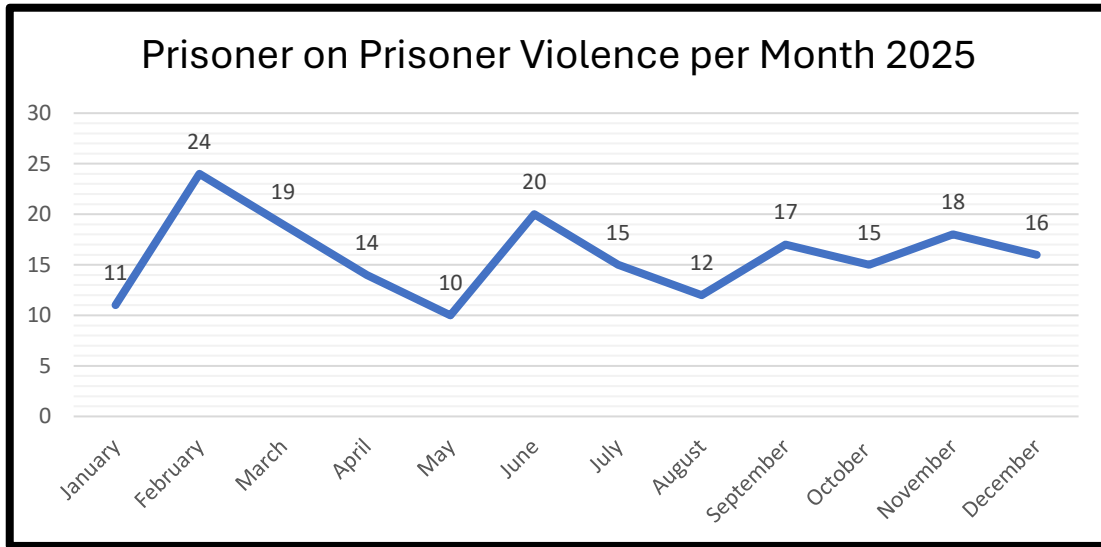
See 4.2: Self-harm comparison between 2024 and 2025



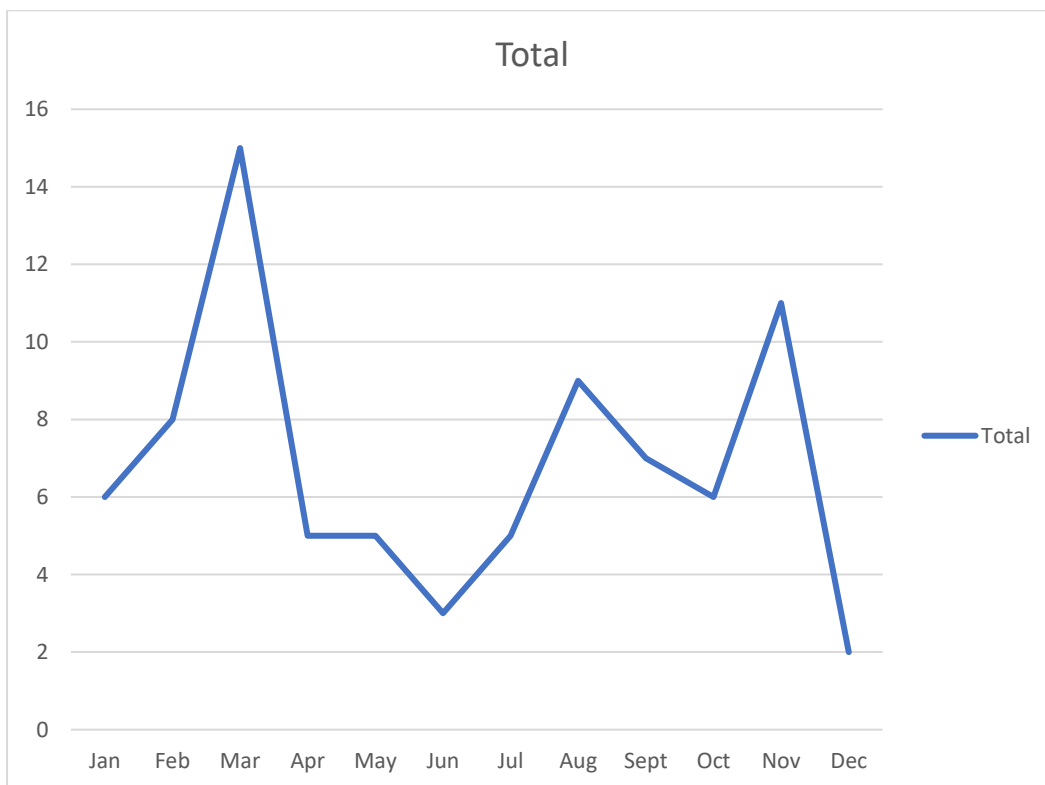
See 4.2: Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans



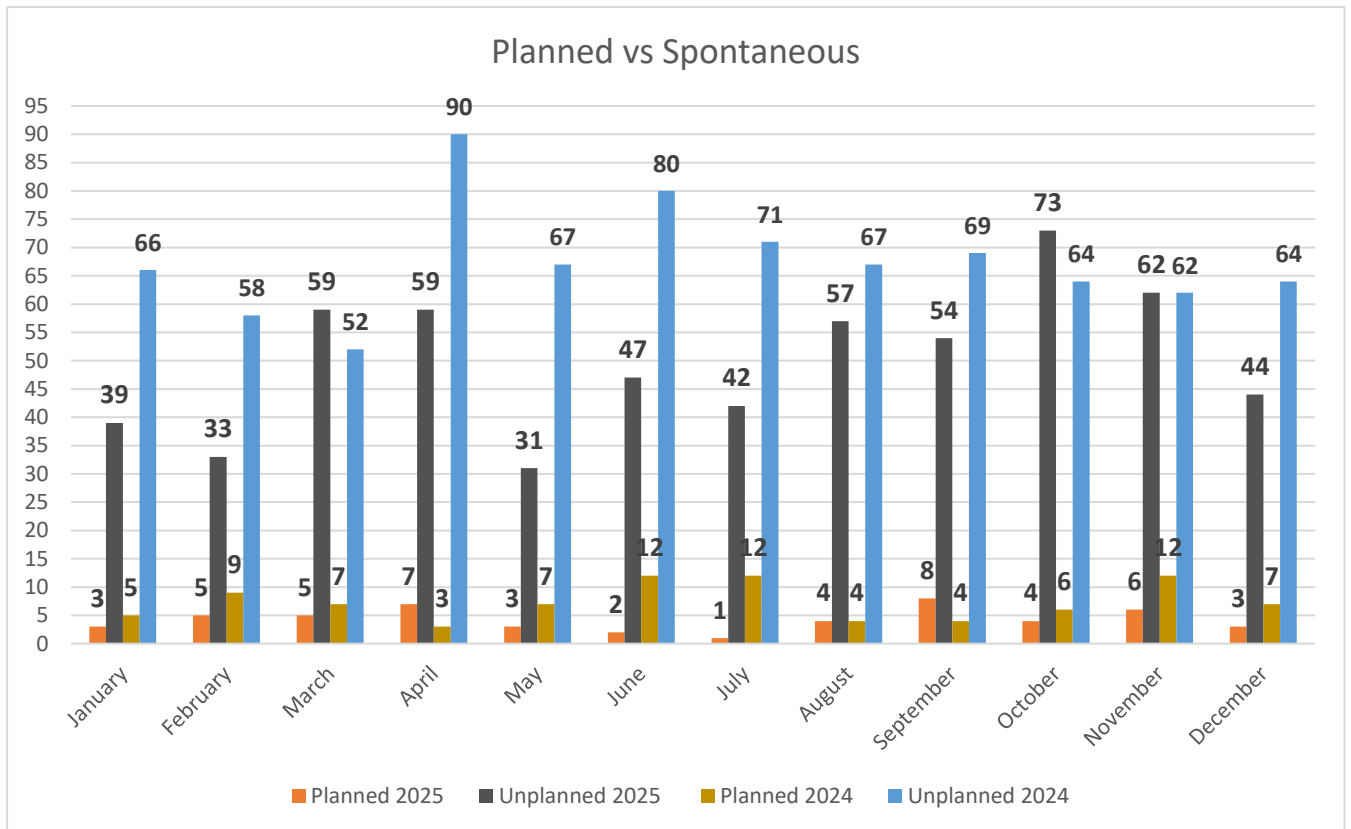
See 4.3: Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults



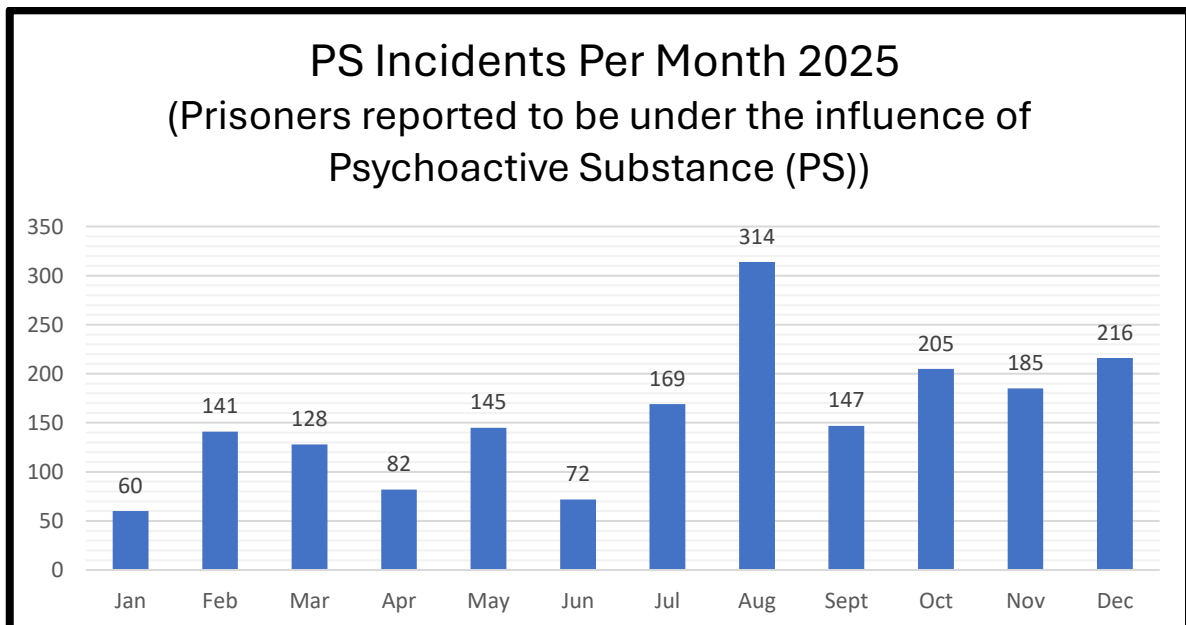
See 4.3: Prisoner-on-staff assaults



See 4.4: Use of force incidents, 2024 vs 2025



See 4.5: Preventing Illicit items. Items seized during searches in 2025





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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at imb@justice.gov.uk