



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Humber

**For reporting year
1 January 2025 to 31 December 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 their 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 recognizes 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 Humber is a large, category C resettlement prison (which holds prisoners whose escape risk is considered low but who cannot be trusted in an open prison) in East Yorkshire, holding up to 1,079 adult men¹. It was formed from a merger in 2014 of the formerly privately run HMP Wolds and HMP Everthorpe, operated by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), which were on adjacent sites and ran independently of each other.

The original HMP Wolds (now called zone 1) opened in 1992 as the first privately run prison in Europe. Originally, it was a remand prison, and in 1993 it re-roled to become a category B prison (for those considered a risk to public safety but not categorised as a maximum security threat). It was again re-roled in 2001 to a category C training prison.

The original HMP Everthorpe (now called zone 2) was built in 1958 as a borstal (a type of youth detention centre, now defunct), converted to house male prisoners in 1991 and operated as a category C training prison.

In November 2012 it was announced that the contract to run HMP Wolds would not be renewed, therefore by default in July 2013 HMP Wolds would be merged into HM Prison Service. HMP Wolds and Everthorpe would be joined to form one prison, which was renamed HMP Humber, managed by one Governor and senior management team.

In January 2014, the two sites were united by means of a connecting walkway and became operational on 1 May 2015, officially running as one prison. Since then, there has been an extensive rationalisation of several functions and use of buildings to operate more efficiently. In September 2022, HMP Humber became the only 100% category C resettlement prison in Yorkshire. During the reporting year 2025, the operational capacity, or OpCap (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), has remained at 1079.

The large, sprawling site now consists of a varied mix of accommodation types, encompassing 14 residential wings, one of which is the Hope unit ('Humber offering progressive environments') progression regime. The site operates with one kitchen, together with a bakery, two libraries, one visitors' centre, one chaplaincy, two gyms, two healthcare units (one primary care and one mental healthcare), with capacity to offer clinics, and one large segregation unit with accommodation for 14 prisoners. Provision for many workshops and an employment hub was formed more recently, in 2022.

Due to increased population pressures across the overall prison estate, two new secure house blocks are under construction, with an anticipated occupation date of early 2027.

At the end of the reporting year of 2025 the prison held 977 adult male prisoners.

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

Background

The designation of the establishment changed from a training and resettlement prison to a category C resettlement prison during 2022. Due to population pressures over the entire prison estate, this has resulted in a greatly increased prisoner 'churn' (the number of prisoners arriving and leaving across a period) and, as such, has impacted processes and regime throughout the establishment. The Board acknowledges the pressures faced by the Prison Service but notes the additional demands it creates.

This report, when read in conjunction with the reports from 2023 and 2024, should give some insight into the continued pressure experienced by the whole workforce at HMP Humber. This shows no sign of abating, as new initiatives to reduce the pressure on the prison estate are introduced, such as early release schemes and the upcoming changes to the license recall regime.

In the Board's view, the ability to offer a meaningful resettlement regime to a population that comprises a significant number of long-term/imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners, a constantly changing short-term recall population and the remaining short-term prisoner cohort, has been a challenge throughout 2025 and will continue into 2026 and beyond.

As a Board, therefore, we continue to acknowledge the professionalism and resilience of the Governor and senior management team (SMT) and commend them on their continued perseverance in progress planning within such limiting constraints. HMP Humber is fortunate to have a stable SMT with long experience of the prison service.

As noted in our previous report, the IMB at HMP Humber has only had five fully active members over the majority of the last 12 months, with an additional four new members being mentored and one on sabbatical. This compares with the recommended complement of 16 members. Hopefully, further additional members will be in position for the next reporting year.

The scope of the Board's monitoring, as noted in our last report, has been largely maintained over the last year. It is pleasing that, due to training and the progress of new members, it has been possible to include them in the production of this report.

3.1 Main findings

As many aspects of the establishment have remained largely unchanged during the reporting period, parts of this report draw on the previous year's wording, with updates made to reflect the latest data and any significant changes.

The Board continues to be seriously concerned that the high level of 'short time to release' prisoners has created significant pressure on all functions within the prison, in some way. It has greatly impacted its ability to offer prisoners the structure, regime and support required for their care and subsequent transition back into the community. The time and resources involved in managing additional short-term residents, who often demonstrate very challenging behaviour, has had a knock-on effect on other prisoners and staff, who have suffered as a result in, for example, a curtailing of regime at short notice, although the frequency of these disruptions reduced markedly during the reporting year.

Safety

- From its observations, the Board continues to believe that, despite a continuing high level of self-harm incidents, violence between men and use of force incidents, and compared with previous reporting years, the prison has generally continued to be a safe place for prisoners.
- HMP Humber moved to a razor-free environment in 2025 to help improve safety, replacing traditional removable-blade razors with safer alternatives. Razors are still occasionally found, mainly when prisoners arrive from other establishments.
- In the Board's view, the Governor and the SMT continues to work tirelessly to prioritise safety, continually giving all possible consideration to progress through their constant planning of a revised alternative regime. This approach aims to maintain the safety of everyone within the establishment – both staff and prisoners – while also trying to increase levels of purposeful activity for prisoners.
- The main issues in regard to safety in the prison are population pressure, i.e. 'churn' of prisoners, resulting in limited time to work with men; the threat of illicit drugs; and limited purposeful activity. Due to the short sentences, men are unable to access work and/or education, as there is insufficient time to obtain the necessary qualifications or to arrange an appropriate work placement.
- The Board was, again, pleased to note the 2024 HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) report's conclusion, that outcomes for prisoners in the area against the healthy prisons' test were reasonably good. The outcomes in the monitoring of this area by the Board over the reporting year would support with this judgement, and the Board is of the opinion that this is a well-managed area of the prison.

Fair and humane treatment

- The Board considers positive work has continued regarding property issues. However, with the increase in population pressure, issues relating to property transfer from other prison establishments are now a greater problem.
- The Board is, again, seriously concerned that 238 prisoners were sharing cells at the end of the reporting year, a reduction of 18 compared with the end of 2024. We view this area as unsatisfactory or not decent.
- Even though the key worker figures have, again, improved since the last reporting year, they have fluctuated throughout this reporting year. This is likely due to staffing pressures, where staff are often required to be redeployed to higher-priority duties, such as managing prisoner behaviour, providing escorts, covering restricted duties or responding to staff sickness.
- A change in shift pattern mid-2025 had a beneficial effect, but that seems to have dissipated and the numbers have reduced again.

Health and wellbeing

- As per our last report, the Board acknowledges the continued level of healthcare service referred to in our previous reports, together with improved staffing levels. However, additional workload has impacted the healthcare providers, with the increased population turnover and the number of men under the possible influence of drugs or alcohol.
- As noted in our last report, issues of mental health are continually raised by men who are not fully occupied. There are only 850 work placements available and, as stated previously, the rate of churn often does not allow adequate time to complete assessments or for men to obtain the required qualifications.

Progression and resettlement

- Reducing reoffending and resettlement planning remains a major focus for staff at HMP Humber during 2025, and we welcome the positive work we have observed in this area. However, we are concerned that the high level of ‘short time to release’ prisoners creates significant pressure on all elements of the resettlement process, including the work of the offender management unit (OMU), and has an impact on prisoners looking to gain qualifications and develop skills. From our observations and analysis of prison data, we are aware that attendance on many courses is low and needs to improve; however, this can be difficult to manage due to the short-term nature of many prisoners’ stays. With the proposed additional cell capacity at HMP Humber, this pressure is expected to continue into 2026.
- Again, the Board remains concerned that too many prisoners can be released with either no fixed abode or with unsustainable accommodation. The strategic housing specialist (SHS), which works between HMPs Hull and Humber, provides support to the housing charity, Shelter, and has set up pre-release panels with local stakeholders and local authorities. The aim is to ensure that arrangements are put in place for each prisoner’s release and to highlight those who are vulnerable and need support.
- The continued positive collaboration with the Hull City Council’s homelessness prevention and options team, for whom the prison has arranged vetting to enable them to draw keys and meet with men on their wings, seems to assist greatly with preparation for release.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Could the Minister provide a full explanation for the reduction of the education budget at HMP Humber?
- In the Minister’s response to the Board’s 2024 annual report, he confirmed that a new pre-release delivery model is to be implemented at HMP Humber, with a greater focus on, amongst others, short- and fixed-term recalls. The Board remains concerned that the result of this will be to continue the churn of prisoners passing through the prison and is unlikely to reduce the prison the population. While the Minister welcomed the Board’s interest in greater use of non-custodial sentences, could he explain why the current system continues to allow for the immediate return to custody of prisoners who, having previously been assessed as safe for release into the community, are alleged to have breached license conditions, which, in the majority of cases, do not involve the commission of a further offence, or at least an offence that would carry, on conviction, a sentence of 12 months or more. In particular, could the Minister set out the policy rationale for this approach, and explain why such breaches cannot be managed safely in the community as an alternative to recall to custody?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Members are concerned about the lack of use of technology in the prison, which results in duplication and delay. Members joining the Board have long been used to operating paper-free environments. There is no facility for prisoners to contact departments electronically; instead, they have to rely on pen and paper to produce documents, which then have to be collected and delivered by prison staff, with responses returned in the same way. Prisoners arriving from other establishments with more effective methods of working are often accompanied by a digital

property card, which then has to be manually transcribed by reception staff. As well as being extremely inefficient, this causes additional unnecessary work, which is particularly inappropriate given the number of prisoners passing through the establishment. Given this, could the Prison Service explain what plans there are to roll out secure digital systems more quickly across prisons, including at HMP Humber?

- Despite responses to previous reports, the Board still receives a number of applications about property that has not been received from a previous establishment. Often, those establishments are extremely slow in responding to enquiries made by HMP Humber on behalf of the prisoner concerned. What action will the Prison Service take to address these ongoing and systemic delays, and how will it ensure that establishments are held accountable for the timely transfer of prisoners' property, recognising the significant impact that such failings have on prisoners' wellbeing?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- The Board acknowledges the work of the Governor and the SMT during the reporting year but has concerns about the conflicting demands made on the prison's resources by the different cohorts of prisoners now housed at HMP Humber, ranging from those serving life sentences to those either on short-term recall or with only 14 days sentence to serve.. What steps is the Prison Service taking to ensure that establishments like HMP Humber are adequately resourced to manage complex and competing demands?

3.3 Response to last report

We are pleased to see that the prison has actioned and continues to address the points raised by HMIP and the Board in its previous report.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

A Prison Strategy White Paper, published in 2021, contained a commitment to look at alternatives to wet-shave razors in prisons, which were used in serious assaults against both prisoners and staff. As a result of a serious assault on a member of staff, HMP Humber became razor free in 2025. This move has been successful, although there are continued issues and finds.

4.1 Reception

There were **2,516** new receptions during the reporting year, compared with **2,372** in 2024. There were **2,217** releases throughout 2025. With an operational capacity (OpCap; the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) of 1,079, reception numbers continue to represent a significant proportion of the overall prison population and reflect the ongoing pressure across the prison estate.

The majority of prisoners received into HMP Humber arrive from HMP Hull, the local category B and remand prison for the area. The establishment also continues to receive a cohort of prisoners from HMP Leeds. Due to sustained population pressures nationally, transfers have, on occasion, originated from further afield, including establishments in the North West. This has added complexity to reception processes, particularly where property and documentation have not always accompanied prisoners in a timely or complete manner.

There have been instances during the reporting year where prisoners have arrived on Saturdays. This has required reception to be opened and staffed outside the usual weekday pattern, placing additional demand on resources. While these occasions appear to have been managed effectively, they inevitably increase operational pressure.

Members of the Board have made a number of visits to reception throughout the year, observing prisoners both entering and leaving the establishment. The Board has consistently noted the supportive and respectful manner in which staff conduct the reception process. This is particularly important given that reception can be an anxious and disorienting environment, especially for those serving their first custodial sentence. The Board observed that staff remain calm and professional, even during busy periods.

From our observations, prisoners are seen promptly by healthcare staff on arrival to identify any immediate physical or mental health concerns. Food is provided, and initial welfare needs are addressed. The body scanner continues to be used for all new arrivals and remains an important safeguard in reducing the introduction of illicit items into the establishment.

Prisoner property should be reviewed on the day of arrival. However, the Board has noted ongoing concerns regarding the management and transfer of property from other establishments. In particular, issues appear more prevalent where prisoners are transferred from privately operated prisons, with property not always arriving at HMP Humber as expected. This causes understandable frustration for prisoners and increases the administrative burden on staff.

Volumetric control measures remain in place to ensure compliance with national policy regarding the amount of property a prisoner may hold in possession. Where property exceeds permitted limits, it is retained in stored property, and prisoners are given the

opportunity to send excess items out of the establishment via social visits or by post.

Despite the continued population pressures and operational challenges, the Board's observations indicate that reception staff have maintained a process that is, overall, safe, efficient and decent.

Induction

Following completion of reception formalities, prisoners typically arrive on the induction wing in the early evening of their first day at the establishment. When the Board has been able to observe, new arrivals are received promptly onto the wing and settled without unnecessary delay. Wing staff, working alongside prisoner 'pilots', ensure that men are allocated cells efficiently and that their immediate needs are met. Arrangements should be in place to help ensure that food is available for those arriving later in the day, reducing the risk of prisoners going without a meal on their first evening.

The induction process ordinarily commences the following day. A notable and particularly effective feature of induction at HMP Humber is the use of trained prisoner 'pilots', who take a leading role in supporting new arrivals. These individuals are longer-standing prisoners who have received training to assist others during their early days in custody. The Board considers this peer-led approach to represent best practice, as it provides reassurance, promotes understanding and helps to reduce anxiety at a critical point in a prisoner's journey.

During induction sessions, pilots provide practical guidance on daily life in the prison. This includes explaining behavioural expectations, wing routines and how to access key services. New prisoners are informed about how to apply for phone credit, book and receive visits, obtain clothing and access facilities such as the gym. Much of this information is delivered directly by the pilots, with staff oversight. The Board considers this model to be highly effective, as information is often more readily understood and accepted when delivered by someone with lived experience of the regime.

However, the Board has observed that the effectiveness of this model is being undermined by the frequent transfer of trained pilots to other establishments. While the pilot scheme is clearly the ideal and should remain central to the induction process, in our view, the loss of experienced prisoners creates inconsistency in delivery and places additional pressure on both staff and remaining pilots. This can impact the continuity and quality of support available to new arrivals.

Prisoners are able to access in-cell telephony from the outset of their time on the wing. This enables them to maintain contact with family and friends and to reach support services such as the Samaritans from day one. The Board considers early access to communication and support to be an important safeguard during what can be a particularly vulnerable period.

In addition to the structured induction sessions, a number of 'surgeries' are available to new arrivals. These include healthcare and chaplaincy, ensuring that prisoners are made aware of the services available to them and are able to raise concerns at an early stage.

However, the Board continues to note concerns regarding prisoners' access to their property during the early stages of custody. There have been occasions when property does not arrive with the prisoner, particularly following transfers from other establishments. In addition, delays can occur while the property is searched and logged on arrival at HMP Humber. As a result, some prisoners do not have timely access to their personal belongings, which can cause frustration and anxiety during what is already a difficult period of transition.

Overall, the Board's observations indicate that induction at HMP Humber is organised, timely and supportive. The 'pilot' scheme remains a key strength and represents the most effective model for supporting new arrivals. However, its full potential is limited by the regular transfer of trained pilots, and this issue requires attention to ensure consistency and sustainability of the approach.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

In the Board's view, the senior management team (SMT) continues to prioritise making HMP Humber a safer prison and, as such, takes a positive, analytical and progressive stance in respect of safety. As a result of the particular focus on reducing self-harm following the increase of incidents in 2024 to 1175, 2025 saw a significant decrease, to 879. July saw a peak, with 105 incidents over the month followed by a continuation of a downward trajectory. The main method of self-harm is cutting, which accounts for 51% of incidents.

The prison continued the progression to battery-operated razors and in February it became razor-free, which resulted in a decrease in self-harm, by cutting with a razor, to 56, from 192 in 2024. Of the 56 in 2025, eight were prior to February and the prison becoming razor-free. Operational issues, e.g. unemployment, property issues, adjudication, PIN credit menu/food issues accounted for 29% of the reasons behind self-harm.

In the reporting period, the number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened (used to manage prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) each month fluctuated between 23 and 41, with a total for the year of 401, which is significantly lower than 600 in 2024 and 459 in 2023. The number of ACCTs being opened each month largely mirrors the number of self-harming men and shares a similar trend. Most ACCTs were opened because of self-injury, or the prisoner stated an intention to self-injure.

A high level of quality assurance continues to be carried out by the safer custody team, with the focus, to a greater extent, still on risks, triggers and preventive factors.

As noted in our previous report, the Board believes that prisoners with the most complex needs, including prolific self-harmers, receive good, multi-disciplinary care and support. A safety intervention management (SIM) meeting is held weekly, which Board members have been able to observe whenever possible.

There were four deaths in custody during the reporting period, three of which were after release from the prison. The remaining one was confirmed as being self-inflicted. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) report in relation to the man who died whilst residing in the prison issued six recommendations, which are being actioned and monitored via the death in custody meetings, which are held quarterly.

At the beginning of the year, there were 12 Samaritans-trained Listeners in the prison. However, this number reduced to five when several Listeners left through the early release scheme (ERS) or by transferring to another establishment, creating a significant challenge. This challenge was exacerbated by the number of short-stay prisoners and the completion time required for the training course. A training programme is scheduled to take place in March 2026. Prisoners have access to the Listeners on arrival in reception and can request to see one on each residential wing, whilst also having access to the Samaritans via the phones in their cells.

From its observations, the Board continues to believe that the prison is generally a safe

place for men in custody, with an established culture of care and attention being given to those in need. Data appears to be monitored and analysed constantly and action taken to mitigate against emerging trends of concern.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

As with self-harm, the data is analysed rigorously, and action appears to be continually taken to address any trends. During the reporting year, there was a total of 332 violent incidents, of which 44 were serious assaults - 35 being prisoner on prisoner and nine being prisoner on staff. Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults peaked in June, with 'peer interaction' being stated as the reason, but they have continued on a downward trajectory since.

As noted in our last report, prisoners are not always forthcoming about the reasons behind incidents and will often not engage in discussion about the incidents, either at the time or during a follow-up investigation. Some are the result of adjudication outcomes and not wanting to remain in a cell after being possibly under the influence of illicit substances. In some cases, prisoners were responsible for continual violent incidents due to wanting a transfer.

Significant work continues to be carried out in relation to behaviour during the early days in custody. Subsequently, in order to continue supporting prisoners and reduce the risk of debt from arrival, debt information booklets are provided where appropriate, and an 'emergency' shop is in place in reception. This enables newly arrived prisoners to purchase essential items, with small loans available, which are repaid in manageable weekly amounts. This approach helps prevent reliance on borrowing from other prisoners. Prisoners are also routinely advised on the importance of avoiding borrowing, managing their finances responsibly, and understanding the risks associated with accruing debt.

Incidents of protesting behaviour and disorder totalled 224 over the reporting year, with Incidents at height being the most prevalent, followed by fires. The primary cause for protesting behavior is often demand for a wing move, resistance to relocate, cell mate issues and transfer requests, which can be very timely due to population pressures.

During the reporting year, HMP Humber opened a dedicated vape-free wing, which appears to have had a positive impact in relation to violence, both on staff and other prisoners.

The prison adheres to the national challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) framework, which is used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence. A total of 516 CSIPs were opened during 2025 (206 for perpetrators of violence; 186 for victims of violence; and 124 for self-isolation), an increase on 313 opened in 2024. They are opened for perpetrators of violence, victims of violence and those who are self-isolating.

4.4 Use of force

There were 633 incidents concerning the use of force (UoF) in the reporting period, compared with 771 in 2023. The incidents peaked in July and November, with 76 and 79 respectively.

The primary reason for the use of force (UoF) was 'risk reduction', specifically through the application of rigid-bar handcuffs. Staff are taught that this is the safest measure for all concerned when faced with non-compliance. Whilst handcuffs are also utilised, positive communication is applied wherever possible to help de-escalate a situation.

The UoF committee, including representation from the IMB whenever possible, meets

monthly to analyse data and view video footage of incidents that have taken place, thereby enabling a prompt response to any concerns and worrying trends.

All operational staff of the appropriate grade use body worn video cameras (BWVC) to safeguard both staff and prisoners. Extensive measures appear to have been put in place to improve the use of BWVCs, including priority use within UoF training, such as, for example, dummy cameras created for scenario-based training. The 30-second pre-record feature has proved to be of significant benefit, which ensures that vital evidence is captured. Approximately 90% of all incidents are now captured on BWVCs. The focus on training has also led to an increase in the use of positive communication before incidents escalate.

The BWVC footage is reviewed at the meeting, where good practice is identified, such as the use of de-escalation techniques, along with incidents needing to be challenged. Reflective feedback from staff involved is encouraged. Board members observe these meetings whenever possible, and are impressed with the emphasis on the critical analysis of a variety of incidents. These are useful meetings, which demonstrate the commitment the prison has in monitoring, challenging and training to ensure force is used appropriately.

Pava incapacitant spray was drawn 22 times during the year and used nine times. The main reason for its use was to address potential self-harm. Batons were drawn on 12 occasions during the year and used seven times, most commonly in response to assaults on another prisoner. These incidents are monitored by the senior management team (SMT) and, where necessary, challenged, investigated and appropriate action taken.

HMP Humber's largest ethnic demographic is white British males aged 30-39. Consequently, use of force incidents are generally higher within this group compared with prisoners from smaller minority ethnic groups. Similarly, there is a higher proportion of UoF incidents among individuals aged 30–39 and young adults aged 21-25.

The Board has recorded attendance, for monitoring purposes, in the command suite at four serious incidents at height (which includes prisoners on the netting, climbing over bars or on the roof) over the reporting year. On all occasions, the national tactical response group, or NTRG (a team trained to intervene in dangerous, high-risk situations), was informed and duly arrived. Members of the Board have observed the operation of the command suite in several serious incidents, and we conclude that the prison handles serious incidents in an extremely professional and well managed way.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Prisoners who have drug and/or alcohol issues continue to be identified and confirmed as such on arrival at HMP Humber, with onward referrals made to the drug and alcohol rehabilitation team (DART) to ensure continuity of care.

The total illicit number of finds for 2025 was 841, compared with 1126 in 2024 and 383 in 2023. A total of 43% of these were drug related, compared with 39% in 2024, and 15% were alcohol related, compared with 16% in 2024. During the reporting year, more suspected UTIs (under the influence) were identified, due to prisoners using tampered vapes so that they could facilitate drug use. As noted in our previous review, some men report that this is due to boredom. A 'vape free' wing was established in 2025 to help support prisoners who wish to progress in a healthier living environment.

From our observations, sources for drugs coming into the prison continue to include bogus Rule 39 (legal) mail and social visits, although drones now appear to be an increasing threat, as are organised crime groups. The methods for dealing with these

include security intelligence, photocopying prisoners' domestic mail and using high-tech scanners to detect traces of drugs on any correspondence, as well as using the body scanner on new arrivals at the prison.

The airport-style gate-security system, introduced during 2022, through which all staff and visitors must enter, was supported by the addition of baggage scanners in 2023 to further increase security.

The Yorkshire area search team (YAST) uses drug-finding sniffer dogs and is usually present in the reception area for the arrival of new prisoners and during social visits. The dogs are also taken on to the wings to search for drugs and alcohol.

Intelligence-led searches and cell clearances are undertaken regularly. Wing staff tend to find the highest amounts of fermenting liquid in the cells, as daily cell checks are undertaken.

Work on in-possession medication checks and supervision of medication hatches to discourage the trading and selling of prescription drugs continues..

A significant number of operational activities were undertaken by the prison throughout the year, some in conjunction with partnership organisations.

Prison-wide amnesties were also held for drugs, weapons and razors. Some of the projects initially implemented in HMP Humber have been rolled out across other establishments throughout Yorkshire.

Mandatory drug testing (MDT) was carried out in the prison during 2025. Compact-based drug testing, undertaken as part of an agreed 'good behavior' contract between the prison and prisoner, is undertaken regularly on the Hope unit and the incentivised substance-free living unit.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

As of December 2025, HMP Humber's operational capacity remained at 1,079, unchanged from the end of 2024. The population at the end of the reporting year stood at 997, leaving 82 spaces available.

As noted in our previous report, work commenced in 2024 on the construction of two new house blocks, with the original completion date projected for late 2025/early 2026, with first arrivals expected in Spring 2026. This timeline has since been revised, and the new anticipated completion date is December 2026. Once operational, the two 60-bed wings will provide additional single-occupancy cells, increasing the establishments overall capacity.

At present, 238 prisoners are housed in double-occupancy cells designed for two people. This represents a reduction of 18 compared with 2024.

The vape-free wing, introduced with the expectation of improving health and wellbeing, has continued to demonstrate positive outcomes throughout 2025. The regime has been enhanced with additional activities to support men choosing to remain vape-free. Levels of self-harm, violence and protesting behaviour on this wing appear to have remained stable and in line with other wings 'with purpose', such as incentivised substance free living (ISFL) unit.

The Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) initiative continues to be a success and well received by the prisoners as part of phase two of the programme. Training and support is given in a range of areas to help prepare for release, such as money management skills, and through constructive activity, such as painting and refurbishing areas, therefore giving back to the establishment.

Food shortages during 2025 remained minimal, with only occasional shortages of certain items reported. The catering team continues to work closely with prisoners and healthcare staff to support those with medical dietary requirements, developing plans to ensure their needs are met.

HMP Humber has been preparing for the new Food in Prisons Policy, which is to be implemented in early 2026. This will introduce a revised, fully analysed and auditable menu.

During 2025, the catering department underwent two national audits conducted by the National Catering Services. Both assessments were positive, with several areas highlighted as the best practice at both regional and national level.

5.2 Segregation

The segregation unit comprises 14 cells, four of which are adapted to be anti-ligature: one has closed-circuit television; another is a photochromatic cell, where the door is made of transparent glass, which allows staff to make easier observations of the prisoner; and two cells can be used as part of the secreted items policy.

By the end of the reporting year, all staff in the segregation unit were experienced in working with prisoners who have complex needs, particularly those related to mental health. All staff are qualified in basic control and restraint (C&R) techniques, one is advanced Tornado trained (specialist incident resource), and all staff are qualified in the use of respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

Members of the Board continue to comment on officers' professional attitudes towards prisoners in the segregation unit and their ability to build a rapport with them, thereby enabling them to help the individual reintegrate back into the wider prison population.

During the reporting year, a small number of prisoners stayed on the unit for more than the initial 42-day limit. The number is similar to that of the previous year and does not of itself cause the Board any concern. In each case, a full explanation was readily available, as were descriptions of efforts being made to either reintegrate the prisoner back on to a wing or to transfer to a more suitable location. From our observations, staff dealt compassionately with these challenging situations, especially where the priority was to keep a prisoner in a place of safety whilst a more appropriate establishment could be found. The Board does, however, share the prison's concern that, occasionally, the time taken to effect such a transfer is too long and imposes a significant burden on officers working in the unit.

During the reporting year, the average number of men segregated per week was, again, nine. The Board considers this to be a good indication of the stability of the prison and reflects the good order usually experienced within the establishment.

Use of force (UoF) incidents in the unit during the year were at a level that did not give the Board cause for concern. All incidents were recorded, with appropriate documentation completed, and these records are made readily available to the Board on request.

The number of dirty protests (where a prisoner has chosen to defecate or urinate in a cell without using the facilities provided) during the year showed a slight increase on the previous year, but all appeared to be professionally managed by staff, and generally of a short duration.

There were fewer prisoners on an ACCT in segregation than during the previous reporting period. Those prisoners supported by an ACCT in segregation continue to be case managed by the segregation supervising officer (SO) and the custodial manager (CM) and are treated as complex cases. If deemed necessary, the adapted cells can be used to accommodate men on open ACCTs. From our observations, segregation staff are also fully aware of ACCT procedures and attend mandatory suicide and self-harm (SASH) training each year.

All prisoners in the segregation unit are supported on a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP). This enables men to be managed through regular multi-disciplinary reviews and includes an exit strategy for each individual.

Prisoners in the unit have access to books, distraction/activity packs, showers and time outside in the exercise area. Portable in-cell phones are available during the day, but are removed at night for safety reasons.

Board members have maintained at least weekly visits to the segregation unit as an integral part of monitoring and made it a priority to speak to each individual prisoner, either with the door unlocked or, on rare occasions, through the cell-door observation panel. Almost all the prisoners we spoke to were fully aware of the reason for being in the unit and reported that they felt well looked after.

Internal adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) have continued throughout the year, with a member of the Board observing them on occasion. The numbers held in 2025 were consistent with the previous reporting year.

An analysis of the supporting documentation showing the location of the alleged offences

and the diversity and inclusion breakdown of prisoners charged does not give the Board any cause for concern.

Segregation review boards take place regularly and an IMB member observes the process whenever possible. The healthcare department, the chaplaincy team and the offender management unit (OMU) regularly attend these reviews. All those we observed were conducted professionally and in a fair manner. The only matter the Board would raise is the sharing of information when a man is moved to the unit for security reasons. While the Board appreciates the need for confidentiality, it recommends that more information is made available to the Governor chairing the review so plans to reintegrate the prisoner to the prison can be made without undue delay.

In April 2024, the segregation unit became a vape-free unit, and the Board has not received any applications (prisoners' written representations) from men complaining about this. It was initiated following concerns in relation to cell fires associated with vapes being in the possession of men. It seems to encourage some men, who may have been reluctant to return to the wing, to consider it a more viable option.

It is noted that when asked by Board members, many prisoners in segregation are positive about the way they are treated.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

The Board considers that staff and prisoner relationships continue to be constructive and positive, although restricted at times due to staffing issues, such as sickness, restricted duties or redeployment. We welcome the move to concentrate on the quality of the key worker sessions rather than the number held.

A total of 15,749, key worker sessions were recorded in 2025, a significant increase on the 11,143 held during 2024. Prisoners arriving at HMP Humber during 2025 were, on average, seen by a key worker within four days of their arrival, a considerable improvement on the average of nine days in 2024. The prison had 185 active key workers by the end of the reporting year.

From our experience of moving around the prison and speaking to and observing prisoners and staff, the Board has no concerns about the treatment prisoners receive at HMP Humber.

5.4 Equality and diversity

From our observations, there is a clear commitment from the senior management team to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, with the aim of improving the quality of life for everyone living, working and visiting HMP Humber. A clear diversity and inclusion strategy for 2025-2027 has been published, detailing the approach to promoting equality and how success will be measured.

The equality action team (EAT) continued to meet bi-monthly during the reporting year, and the Board is pleased with both the volume and level of detail in the information shared, monitored, and discussed.

The Board has been provided with detailed information to allow a serious consideration of outcomes for a range of protected groups (which include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) in areas such as the use of force, adjudications (disciplinary hearings held when prisoners are alleged to have broken prison rules) and incentives scheme status, which have raised few concerns with us. Where apparent discrepancies have appeared, these appear to have been fully

explained, and the Board is happy to report that these are interrogated at the meetings referred to above.

Several forums take place regularly, which Board members attend occasionally to observe, which address the issues raised by different protected characteristic groups, e.g. race, sexual orientation, young adults, disability and 50+. These are useful tools and an opportunity for prisoners to raise issues which might otherwise be missed.

Young adults were identified as causing more disruption, and a new forum enabled the views and needs of this group to be discussed. The Humber Hope Hacks Violence partnership offered to work with HMP Humber in supporting young adults in custody. A young adult summer sports event was arranged as a result.

Other special events have been organised, such as Black History Month, and for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller prisoners, which were well received.

Meals appropriate to religious and other festivals have continued to be provided as part of the weekly menu choice.

The number of foreign national prisoners over the reporting year was similar to the previous two years. From our observations, the prison continues to have good working relationships with Home Office immigration enforcement staff, who visit the prison regularly to host clinics so that prisoners receive regular face-to-face updates on their case. Notices continue to be translated, and appropriate distraction materials and picture dictionaries are available. The in-cell entertainment (ICE) TV channel broadcasts material for foreign national prisoners at given time slots.

A total of 36 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) were logged during the reporting year, compared with 57 in 2024, with independent scrutiny of the completed DIRFs being provided by the Zahid Mubarek Trust charity.

From our observations, we are confident that a focus on equality and diversity has a high profile across the prison and data is analysed effectively in order create and develop activities to promote the wellbeing of all.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The Board considers the chaplaincy team continued to deliver its statutory responsibilities to a very high standard in 2025. Corporate worship across all faith groups has been well attended and smaller faith group sessions remained consistent. Members of the chaplaincy team are a regular presence around the establishment.

The needs of Christian, Muslim, Pagan, Buddhist, Jewish, and Latter-Day Saints men continued to be served through regular attendance from their respective chaplains. It proved impossible to appoint a dedicated Sikh chaplain during 2025, but the wider chaplaincy team continued to offer Sikh group meetings, encouraging the community to observe and celebrate their festivals. The Board understands that a new Sikh chaplain has been identified, who will hopefully be in post early in 2026.

All men on an ACCT continue to receive a pastoral visit from a chaplain once a week. To maintain a multi-disciplinary approach, the chaplaincy team has become the primary point of contact for ACCT reviews. Other departments such as healthcare and mental health are not always available or required, so the focus often moves to chaplaincy. Depending on the number of reviews scheduled on any given day, the team would attend an average of 4-6 reviews per day.

In the Board's view, the chaplaincy staff continue to consistently go above and beyond to

provide pastoral care and support to prisoners. During times of bereavement, when a prisoner is unable to attend a funeral, chaplains have arranged individual services in the chapel to mark the death rather than simply conducting a candle lighting. Three types of bereavement care are offered: individual care from a chaplain; the Living with Loss Programme; and Cruse Bereavement counselling.

As noted last year, the recruitment of prison visitor volunteers (OPVs) continues to be a challenge, but it is hoped that a small number will be appointed in 2026 to provide further support to prisoners with no family contact.

5.6 Incentives schemes

From its observations, the Board is satisfied that the incentives scheme has been applied positively in order to manage behaviour, and considers it is operated fairly and consistently. Forums take place involving both staff and prisoners in order to discuss motivational opportunities.

The table below shows the average proportion of prisoners by incentive level, for the last three years:

Year	Enhanced (top level)	Standard (middle)	Basic (bottom)
2025	52%	44%	4%
2024	56%	42%	3%
2023	66%	31%	3%

5.7 Complaints

The prison appears to have focused on improving the management of prisoner complaints over the last two years, including increasing the number of staff working in the area. This has led to greater efficiency of the complaints process, enabling more thorough analysis of the data and driving improvements. For example, there are now fewer complaints relating to cell clearance, as paperwork is being completed correctly. In addition to managing complaints, staff now have greater capacity to attend prisoner forums and visit the wings, increasing their visibility to prisoners.

A total of 1308 complaints were received in 2025, which averages at 109 per month, compared with 132 in 2024. The peak was in April, with 135, and the lowest in September, when 77 were received.

Assurance checks are carried out regularly by the IMB, the head of assurance and the functional manager, ensuring the quality of the responses and that they are within timescales.

Members of the IMB have good working relationships with the complaints team, which is helpful, as prisoners continue to submit duplicate copies of their complaints to both the prison and to the IMB in the hope of speeding up or receiving a more favourable response.

There were 233 external complaints in 2025, with property lost on transfer being one of the main causes for complaint. The volumetric control of property when a prisoner is transferred means that some property is left behind at the previous prison. These complaints are particularly challenging to resolve, as the level of communication and attention from the prisoners' previous establishments can vary.

5.8 Property

The level of property loss at HMP Humber continues to be an issue, with 208 complaints about property logged by the prison in 2025. This includes complaints about property left at previous prison, as well as those about property within the prison.

However, the Board notes that there was a reduction in the number of complaints to the IMB about property this year. In 2025, the Board received 15 applications (compared with 25 in 2024) in relation to property in the current establishment and 17 (compared with 28 in 2024) in relation to property from their previous prison.

A member of the IMB completed a 'bus-to-bed' monitoring exercise and observed an efficient process to managing property on arrival. Labelled boxes are set up with prisoners' names and numbers, allowing bags to be placed directly in front of the correct box. Property is checked against each individual's property card, and any property not listed can be added as necessary. Electrical items are identified and tagged appropriately. The property store appears to be very well ordered, clearly labelled and tidy. In the Board's view, the team's attention to detail is excellent.

The Board also notes that cell-clearance training continues to be provided to residential staff to help reduce the loss of property when prisoners move locations within the establishment.

The Board believes that staff work hard to deal with property issues at HMP Humber and is aware that property is an issue across the whole prison estate, as reported in several other IMB annual reports.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Spectrum Community Health CIC (community interest company), or Spectrum, continues to act as the main provider of health and social care services, as it has since taking over the contract in 2022. As in 2024, non-clinical substance misuse services are subcontracted to the charity Change, Grow, Live (CGL), with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust commissioned to deliver mental health services and Time for Teeth commissioned to provide dental services.

The improved level of service referred to in our previous reports has continued. The Board is pleased to report a business case for an improved staffing model from NHS England has been approved. The Board is also pleased to report the completion of the new pharmacy, alleviating some of the pressures experienced by staff and men.

New arrivals continue to be assessed at reception. Healthcare staff also have a presence during ACCT and segregation review boards.

The monthly drug strategy meeting and prisoner health operation group (PHOG) continue. The meetings are chaired by the Governor who is responsible for maintaining safe delivery of healthcare services within the prison. This also ensures improving links between the healthcare team, managers and prison staff. Complaints and applications continue to remain low.

6.2 Physical healthcare

As in the previous year, staff vacancies remained low. However, vetting for new staff is slow and the team is awaiting approval on a business case for the two wings in the new house block.

As previously reported, healthcare provision does not operate on a 24-hour basis; however, contact details are available for advice. An urgent treatment centre is accessible at Bransholme Health Centre. A handover takes place between healthcare staff and prison night staff, highlighting prisoners who may be of concern

A number of clinics are offered and waiting times are reasonable, in the Board's view. The dedicated patient phone line continues to work well, and a patient liaison role has been introduced, with staff visiting wings and speaking to men face to face to ensure that as few critical appointments as possible are missed.

GP appointments, nurse-led clinics, physiotherapy, optometry and podiatry appointments are available.

As reported last year, clinic room space continues to be over-subscribed, which does limit the opportunity to offer additional services. However, the staff continue to use a 'making every contact count' (MECC) approach, to help ensure that meetings support positive health and wellbeing.

Concerns about the available healthcare accommodation as the population rises is shared by both the Board and healthcare providers. The Board understands there may be a possibility of upgrading previous unused space within the prison.

The winter vaccination programme has been implemented.

The specialist nurse appointed in early 2025 to help improve the quality for men living with long-term conditions has been welcomed by prisoners and the Board.

6.3 Mental health

As in 2024, TEWV continues to be responsible for the delivery of mental health services. Staff recruitment in this area remains challenging. Last year, the Board reported that strategies were being explored to improve recruitment, and more recently, staffing and leadership have become more stable.

Prisoners are assessed on arrival and can self-refer to the mental health service at any time. Despite pressures arising from a high number of ACCT referrals, the team appears to continue working to improve attendance at ACCT reviews, as well as to provide quicker triage, assessment and interventions. However, the primary service acknowledges that there is still further work to do.

As previously reported, the team provides services daily, with certain treatments and therapies being sub-contracted to agencies such as Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust and Rethink to provide additional services. The Board would welcome an improvement in the services available to men who have less serious conditions.

The Board is pleased to report greatly increased attendance by mental health colleagues at ACCT reviews. The team attended a combination of 1631 initial and further reviews in the reporting year.

Workspace, particularly patient-facing space, continues to be an issue, which can result in men being seen for assessment in unsuitable environments. However, the Board is pleased to report that additional office space has been made available for staff, which should enable improvements to the service.

From our observations, the team has a professional working relationship within the establishment and offers mental health awareness training, although they are aware that this does need to improve.

Transfers for mental health admission, assessment at the gate, and transfer to secure placements have taken place within acceptable timeframes, in the Board's view, during the reporting year.

6.4 Social care

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council has worked within HMP Humber since 2021. Working collaboratively with Spectrum and the prison, the team aims to provide a consistent level of social care and support to those in custody. Where a prisoner has eligible needs, the local authority is responsible for meeting them. Where a prisoner does not meet the eligibility criteria, the local authority should provide written information about what can be done to meet or reduce needs. This should then be the responsibility of the prison and may include prisoners supporting other prisoners. HMP Humber offer this through a 'buddy scheme'.

Buddies assist in basic needs such as cleaning, writing applications (prisoners' written representations to the IMB), for example, menus, reading and collection of meals, encouraging, when appropriate, the independence of the individual.

The team visits the establishment to conduct Social Care Act assessments and provide recommendations for healthcare packages. The Board is pleased to note the team now has access to shared office accommodation.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

The Board is pleased to see that efforts continued during 2025 to run a comprehensive

physical education (PE) programme, including outdoor activity, within the prison.

The prison ran its accreditation programme for younger prisoners to obtain the Duke of Edinburgh's (DoE) Award. However, the initiative across 2025 was hampered by the high turnover of the prison population which, in turn, led to a lack of uptake. We understand it is unlikely that the DoE programme will be renewed beyond 2026.

The Shield course, previously called PADS, continues to be a highly important part of the prison's outdoor activity and personal development programme. It is a five-day intensive course, run along the lines of military basic training. The concentrated timescale means that it can work within the constraints of continuous prisoner turnover. The course is run twice a year, with around 50 men applying for 26 places available on each course. It is worth noting that the Shield course was initiated in HMP Humber, but has subsequently been successfully replicated in three other prisons.

The gym timetable featured a large range of activities, including football, weights, badminton, circuits, spinning, stretch mobility, volleyball and racquet sports, with dedicated sessions for prisoners detoxing from methadone.

The PE department continues to organise a regular fitness incentive scheme called 'HMP Humber's Fittest Man'. A previously run football coaching course in partnership with Scunthorpe United was dropped in 2025 due to soaring costs. However, the PE team continues to run accredited coaching courses in football, rugby, cross-fit and Olympic weightlifting. Additionally, formal courses are run in the areas of nutrition, healthy living and first aid.

In addition to scheduled gymnasium sessions (up to six sessions per week for prisoners on enhanced, or top, level of the incentives scheme). The PE staff continue to take exercise referrals from the healthcare team for prisoners suffering from physical issues and also mental health conditions (particularly anxiety).

It is apparent from our observations that the PE staff are committed to their work and take considerable responsibility for the prisoners under their care.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Clinical substance-use support is provided by Spectrum and psychosocial support by the charity CGL. Between January and December 2025, there were 1301 treatment episodes recorded, 930 of which had a clinical intervention.

From our monitoring, new referrals continue to be seen promptly and are provided with appropriate advice and information. Previously reported care plans continued for prisoners transferring from Hull. Prisoners can self-refer and staff are aware of how to progress referrals.

However, men under the influence (UTI) continue to present a challenge. For comparison, reported incidents were 88 in October 2024 and 57 in October 2025. Further snapshots show 30 incidents in November 2025 and 79 in December 2025, with a peak in July (200) and a low in April (28). This fluctuation may relate to the number of men passing through the establishment, but it nevertheless increases the workload for staff. All men - many of whom are not previously known to the service - are seen by a member of CGL, provided with appropriate information and advice, and encouraged to engage with support, which further adds to demand on the team's resources.

The recovery programme at HMP Humber has been reviewed in response to prisoner turnover and sentence lengths. Previously, men were required to have at least 18 weeks remaining on their sentence to access the CGL recovery wing. Following a review of

caseloads and sentence lengths, CGL has amended the referral process to allow men to access the programme in stages. For example, a man with 15 weeks remaining may be offered Part 1 (six weeks) and Part 2 (six weeks) of the programme.

At the end of the reporting year, there were 117 prisoners housed on the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) wings. Prisoners have to apply to move to these wings and agree to the conditions set, including agreeing to regular drug testing. As prisoners continue to arrive on a daily basis with very short sentences, many who would be identified as suitable for support/ISFL living do not have access to tailored care packages, as staff do not seem to have enough time to work with them.

As the Board reported last year. Espranor and Buvidal (drug substitution treatments for opioid dependence) continue to be used as an alternative to methadone. To safely prescribe in terms of regular reviews, prisoners require about six months to serve on their sentence. However, with so many men serving shorter sentences, the time the team has to work with them tends to be limited.

Prisoners continue to be offered naloxone kits (a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose), together with training in its use, prior to release. As previously reported, not all those trained take a naloxone kit when leaving the establishment. Planning and advice continue to be offered before prisoners leave and appointments are made with teams in the community so they can continue treatment.

6.7 Soft skills

As previously reported, the prison's in-cell television, ICE TV, is used to provide men with a full soft-skills programme. The Governor continues to provide updates, and information is given on the prison regime and any changes to the schedule.

Art lessons continue, and gym sessions are also available; the gym also promotes the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Ingeus provides support with CV writing, covering letters and referrals.

Sessions from DART (drug and alcohol recovery team) on managing drug addiction and mental health continue.

Information is provided on a wide range of other subjects, including canteen, author of the month, poets' corner and news from the chaplaincy team at the appropriate time of the year. Information is provided on a range of faith, including Buddhism, Paganism, Islam, Roman Catholicism and the Church of England. Programmes run in the evenings for men observing Ramadan.

Adverts for jobs and meetings - such as those for veterans' groups, bereavement counselling, the Shannon Trust, Humber Pilots, Listeners and Andy's Man Club - are displayed.

Soft skills development continues to be delivered through a range of resettlement programmes, including:

- Diversity and inclusion forums held across the prison.
- Ready for Release programmes on the Creating Future Opportunities wing, comprising three modules: resettlement, community payback and paid employment. Community payback includes fundraising initiatives, such as working with B&Q to produce items for people experiencing homelessness.

Building Choices is a new, accredited offending behaviour programme designed to

reduce reoffending among prisoners who are eligible and ready to engage. The programme is delivered by the prison's funded accredited programmes team. As reported previously, the number of men passing through the prison has continued to have a significant impact on the establishment's ability to deliver a full range of interventions and support services. However, the Board is pleased to report that the departure hub, introduced during the reporting year, provides practical resettlement support for men with 20 weeks or less remaining on their sentence. This includes access to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) services, assistance with banking arrangements, employment support, CV preparation and obtaining identification documents.

7. Progression and resettlement

The Board remains of the view that the education and work departments continue to provide a good service to the prison, despite a succession of challenges and pressures.

In 2025, challenges included the continued rapid turnover in the prison population, along with short sentences, which limited opportunities for some men to benefit from the provision available. In addition, budget reductions led to the withdrawal of some services and resulted in nine redundancies.

The issue with the 'churn' has been noted previously, and the Board does not anticipate any improvement in the short to medium term, given factors such as the changes to the recall process.

The budget cut was around 20% and the Board acknowledges that other establishments were harder hit. However, whilst HMP Humber's role remains as a training and resettlement prison, any cut makes it harder to achieve the aims of rehabilitation and reducing re-offending.

The budget reduction, while challenging, was partly mitigated by investment in IT, which has enabled the assessment of digital skills and the creation of neurodiversity profiles at induction. These profiles remain with a prisoner throughout their sentence, regardless of establishment.

The Board commends the management team for their efforts in addressing these challenges and in identifying a way forward that makes effective use of reduced resources.

Education, library

Novus is the main education provider in the prison and offers a range of courses, including Maths and English, plus a variety of vocational training and several unaccredited courses. Novus has also run the library contract from the beginning of prison education contract (PES; October 2025). The PES contract has caused a contraction of education provision across the prison estate. Humber has been affected, although, as we understand it, not to the same extent as many other establishments. The site has lost the digital skills class, a small self-employment provision, a Novus Works adviser, a small element of the art provision (which otherwise remains mostly intact) and some support staff.

Typically, 10-15 prisoners are enrolled in Open University degree courses in subjects such as history, business management and criminology, or in other distance learning courses below degree level. Some of these are funded by grants from the Prison Education Trust.

The table below shows the qualification passes for learners in Maths, English and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) during 2025, with 2023 and 2024 figures for comparison.

Qualification achieved	Entry Level			Level 1			Level 2		
	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023
Maths	120	153	117	60	60	38	1	5	1
English	106	131	131	87	104	113	8	14	4
ESOL	7	23	30	0	9	0	0	0	0

Novus staff have been heavily involved in the success of the prison reading strategy, working with HMPPS partners. Prisoners in classes are encouraged to read and are given time to do so (technical books but also reading for pleasure) and several initiatives and competitions have been run to encourage reading. The new Reading Groups provision and Emergent Readers provision caters for men who enjoy reading or want to try reading for pleasure and for those who struggle with reading and need help to be able to improve their reading skills.

There are two libraries, one in each zone of the prison, both of which are now (since the advent of PES in October 2025) run by Novus. Prisoners have the opportunity to visit the library regularly and there is a regular timetable for Wings and for work and education areas to visit. Prisoners can read to their children via the Storybook Dads provision.

7.1 Vocational training

The table below shows the number of vocational qualifications attained in Novus provision in 2025. The range of qualifications covers bricklaying, maintenance operations, construction skills, CSCS card, waste management, horticulture, industrial cleaning, catering, and health and safety. Waste management and horticulture are delivered in partnership with the prison industries teams in waste and gardens (and Novus continued to work with industries to internally verify their Performing Manufacturing Operations qualification until October).

Qualification achieved	Level 1			Level 2			Level 3		
	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023
Number of learners	164	236	196	533	535	492	17	22	25

Over 1,000 unaccredited courses were passed, and 309 men engaged with Novus Works before it finished in October.

From our observations, great efforts are made to ensure that as many prisoners as possible are engaged in purposeful activity, and this begins with the Induction process (delivered by Novus Advise until Ingeus took this over in April 2025). The careers, advice and guidance (CIAG) service gives prisoners impartial advice and guidance to ensure they are clear about their choices for learning, work and employment opportunities on release. Prisoners are encouraged to create their own personal learning plan.

The challenge has continued to be difficult because of the rapid churn of the prison population. It is very difficult for short-stay prisoners to get the benefit of many of the training and courses on offer, particularly for advanced skills or where formal qualifications may require many weeks to complete courses. In addition, many courses require a qualification in English or Maths before men can progress.

Springboard, a scheme for encouraging the most challenging prisoners to engage, operates in the establishment and typically supports 12 men at any one time. Novus Works (not commissioned after October 2025) engaged with men three months before release, and after release where required. They supported around 80 men each year into employment or training leading to work, with common sectors including rail engineering, dock work and construction.

Novus learners can take part in a wide range of enrichment activities. These include entering work into the Koestler Prison Arts Awards and participating in singing groups. Learners also have opportunities to exhibit artwork externally through organisations such as the Scarborough Gallery and Holocaust Memorial Day Exhibition. In addition, they engage in themed days and activities, often linked to the equality and diversity calendar. Learners can also produce work in vocational areas beyond the formal curriculum, helping to extend their imagination and develop more positive attitudes towards their own success and future possibilities.

Humber has widened its training and development opportunities through the opening of a textile, warehousing and waste recycling workshop. Textiles are receiving work from prison industries, with a potential doubling of targets and outputs, leading to more opportunities for prisoners.

Increased links with local commercial companies are also enabling Humber to continue to broaden its relationship with local employers, and there appears to be a healthy pipeline of work.

Through the dynamic purchasing system, support and guidance with CV writing is offered to prisoners, as well as the opportunity to complete an employability readiness course, which has been well received by prisoners. Humber has also provided a 'reading champion' who has established wing libraries, encouraged more reading groups, liaised with the library provision and publicised reading and a variety of competitions across the site. This has helped to raise the profile and increase the delivery of reading opportunities across the site.

7.2 Offender management, progression

There are several factors that have had an impact on the work of the offender management unit (OMU) this year.

The Board has documented its concern about the increased churn of prisoners for the last few years. An increased number of prisoners with only a short time left to serve obviously places pressure on the work of the OMU. In 2025, as in 2023 and 2024, this has also been exacerbated by the early release schemes. Despite these pressure, the Board believes that this department has risen to the challenge and continues to maintain high standards. From our observations, members of the team work well together and have been able to continue several successful initiatives, such as providing induction information to new prisoners and the daily one-hour offender management in custody (OMiC) phone hotline introduced previously, as well as successfully managing the new release schemes.

At the end of 2025, there were approximately 175 releases each month and around 200 transfers in per month. The fixed term recall - FTR48 - release scheme was managed extremely well, in our view, with the second highest number of releases in the country.

Recategorisation reviews (which assess a prisoner's risk, behaviour and efforts towards rehabilitation to see if they can be managed in a prison with a different/lower level of security) continued throughout 2025. Transfers to open conditions were managed with minimal delays, with 110 moves during the year.

Extra resources had been used to reduce the backlog of the offender assessment system

(OASys) in previous years, and Humber appeared to be in a very positive position. However, after the release schemes in 2024 and 2025, the backlog has increased again. The Board believes this is manageable, with provided support, and has no concerns.

Generally, the prison does not offer release on temporary licence (ROTL), because risks to security have an impact on the safety of the prison, although cases are considered on an individual basis. No prisoners were released on ROTL during 2025.

At the end of 2025, there were 31 indeterminate-sentenced prisoners (ISP), who have no release date, housed in HMP Humber, 18 of whom were subject to imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences.

Humber has a specific wing, known as the Hope unit, which aims to release ISP prisoners into the community successfully without recall, and to equip them with the skills, knowledge and support to make that transition. This forward-looking innovative unit is very successful. A total of 18 of the ISPs (a mix of IPP and life- sentence prisoners) were in the Hope unit in 2025, of which eight were life sentence prisoners.

From the unit opening in May 2018 to the end of 2025, well over 100 prisoners have gained release through this regime, including 13 this year who have either been released or progressed to category D (open prison) status.

The unit has strong links with the charity, the Hardman Trust, which provides grants to prisoners approaching release who have served 10 years or more of their current sentence, to support their progression. The Hope unit encourages prisoners to apply for these grants. In 2025, seven applications from prisoners in the unit were successful, with just over £7,000 awarded to those in custody, for example to support study and progression to further education on release.

Recognising the additional challenges ISP/IPP prisoners face on release, a prisoner helpline number has been provided so they can receive support over the phone. This appear to continue to work well.

At the end of the 2024, the Hope unit was assessed and was successful in gaining the Enabling Environment Award. This is a national project that aims to encourage services to create positive and rewarding places to live, work and study. In the Board's view, this was a phenomenal achievement for a unit within a prison. In 2025 at the National Staff Awards, the Hope unit was awarded the national teams award, which, again, is a phenomenal achievement and reflects the rehabilitative regime being delivered.

In the Board's view, offender management and progression continues to be an area of strength within the prison.

7.3 Family contact

Social visits have been taking place throughout 2025 and are obviously a popular means of prisoners maintaining positive family and significant other ties.

Family days (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings) were held every month throughout 2025, all of which were well received and allowed a more relaxed environment to enjoy family time.

Prison video calls were used during the year, albeit with some technical issues, which appear to have been managed. They were particularly beneficial for prisoners located a considerable distance from home - something now seen more frequently - although they are not as widely used as they might be.

In-cell phones are of great benefit to prisoners for contacting family, friends and legal advisers, as well as for some healthcare and resettlement appointments and conversations with the IMB.

The prison identifies and contacts prisoners with no family contact and low phone use on an ongoing basis to offer support. Events have taken place that are jointly run by Lincolnshire Action Trust and the safer custody team for prisoners who do not receive social visits. Whilst the prison helps and encourages those in its care to keep in contact with their families, children and friends, some prisoners prefer not to have visitors, either social or video calls, which has to be respected.

7.4 Resettlement planning

From our observations, reducing reoffending and resettlement planning continued to be a major focus for staff at HMP Humber during 2025. The resettlement hub consists of commissioned services and prison departments working together to jointly provide a supportive service for prisoners nearing their release date.

The following services are offered through the resettlement and employment hub team:

- Induction: Staff and some trained prisoners visit the induction wing once a week to engage with all new prisoners transferred in, to offer support and promote the services, opportunities and support offered by the employment hub.
- 12-weeks-to-release appointments: Staff contact all men who are identified as having 12 weeks left before release, or who come into the prison with fewer than 12 weeks to serve. They hold a 'resettlement check-in' to help ensure all avenues of support are in place ready for release.
- Humber employment advisory board (EAB). EABs are chaired by representatives of employers. They offer guidance to establishments on the best way to get prisoners work-ready for their local labour market.
- Identification (ID) and bank accounts for released prisoners: The ID and banking clerk processes applications for birth certificates and bank accounts with Halifax bank. HMP Humber can also process driving licence applications in certain circumstances.
- Accommodation: Housing charity Shelter is the primary contractor for accommodation referrals from the community offender manager (COM). However, the contract restricts this to referrals within the Yorkshire and Humber areas only. For those who are out of the area, the commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) accommodation provision can be delivered remotely. Accommodation issues can also be dealt with by a prisoner offender manager (POM) and/or the pre-release team.

The Board remains concerned that too many prisoners are released with either no fixed abode or with unsustainable accommodation. However, the 2025 figures show that 90% of prisoners are released to first night accommodation and 35% to sustainable accommodation.

The strategic housing specialist (SHS), who works between HMPs Hull and Humber,

provides support to Shelter and has set up pre-release panels with local stakeholders and local authorities. The aim is to ensure that arrangements are put in place for each prisoner's release and to highlight those who are vulnerable and need support. Close co-operation with Hull City Council's homelessness prevention and options team continues and members are vetted to enter the prison.

8. The work of the Board

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the prison	274

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	15
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	5	7
C	Equality	5	4
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	20	19
E	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	18	19
F	Finance, including pay, private monies & spends		
F	Food and kitchens	10	11
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	40	31
H1	Property within the establishment	42	25
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	35	28
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	14	9
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	26	10
J	Staff and prisoner concerns, including bullying	34	21
K	Transfers	32	16
L	Miscellaneous	34	21
Z	Complaints on Comp1s and Comp 1As	7	10
	Total number of applications	331	246

Annex A

Key service providers

- Physical healthcare: Spectrum Community Health (a community interest company/CIC)
- Mental healthcare: Tees, Esk & Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust
- Substance misuse treatment: Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
- Dental: Time for Teeth (TFT)
- Education framework: Novus
- Escort contractor: GeoAmey



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