



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Pentonville

**For reporting year
1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026**

Published August 2026



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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI Pentonville, in the London Borough of Islington, is a category B local prison, primarily serving the magistrates' and crown courts in North and East London. The four cell blocks remain much as they were when the prison was opened in 1842.

Pentonville holds category B and C adult men and young adult (YA) men aged 18 to 25. Ordinarily about a third of the population held are on remand but, as has been the case over the past few years, the proportion in the reporting year was much higher at approximately 80%.

The certified normal accommodation (the number of prisoners a prison can hold without being overcrowded) is 909 prisoners¹. The operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners it can hold without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) is 1,205. At the end of the reporting year, there were approximately 1,180 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

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- First-night cell readiness and regular provision of welfare calls improved after new systems were introduced. (4.1)
- Accurate completion of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) paperwork (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm or suicide) remained an issue. However, when monitoring in-person ACCT reviews, the Board was pleased to observe the high standard of care afforded to the prisoner. (4.2)
- There was an insufficient number of Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) over most of the reporting year. This largely reflected national population pressures meaning Listeners could not be put on hold and kept at Pentonville. (4.2)
- Notwithstanding the long-awaited move of vulnerable prisoners to a dedicated wing and the potential increased opportunities it was anticipated that this would bring, this group was still experiencing a much more restricted regime than their counterparts on other wings. (4.2)
- The poor state of many external cell windows and grilles continued to hinder the prison in its battle against contraband being delivered by drone. (4.5)
- The Board was concerned that efforts by management to ensure proper officer supervision at all times of prisoners receiving medication was ineffective, risking the diversion of prescribed medication into the illegal prison economy. (6.6)

Fair and humane treatment

- The crumbling fabric of the prison and poor conditions remained a serious concern to the Board. The building is susceptible to infestations of rats, mice, cockroaches and flies. (5.1)
- The majority of men share cramped cells built for single occupancy, and which are often in a poor state. These conditions are not decent or humane. Repairs are slow and often only provide a temporary fix. (5.1)
- The condition of the care and separation unit (CSU), where men are segregated in single cells, remained a concern. Some of the cells had damp and/or fly infestations, the shower needed refurbishment and lighting on the landing was very poor for several months at the end of the reporting year. (5.2)
- The prisoner platform meetings continued to be a valuable and collaborative forum for prisoners to bring their concerns to management. (5.3)
- There were inconsistencies in the quality staff-prisoner relationships, as observed by the Board and reported by prisoners in a variety of forums. (5.3)
- Pentonville remains a completely unsuitable environment for prisoners with mobility issues. (5.4)
- The Board welcomed the long overdue repair of the mosque roof and the installation of new carpets. However, due to poor workmanship, the washing area (containing eight foot washing stations) remained out of use awaiting funding for another set of contractors to redo the repairs. (5.5)

- The system for transfer of prisoner property between prisons remained unfit for purpose, with prisoners often having to wait weeks or months for their belongings to arrive, and property sometimes being lost altogether. (5.8)

Health and wellbeing

- Some of the most complex prisoners who could not settle on even a specialist wing, such as the neurodiverse unit, were observed to move between the CSU and healthcare in-patients (neither of which was a suitable place). (5.2)
- Applications to the healthcare department were not acknowledged so prisoners were unaware if their request for a healthcare appointment had been received, whereas complaints were always acknowledged by letter. (6.1)
- The wellbeing centre continued to be an underused resource. This was regrettable as Board members were frequently told by prisoners who attended how beneficial they felt it was for their wellbeing. (6.3)

Progression and resettlement

- Time out of cell remained a serious concern. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) reported in March 2026, that around one-third of Pentonville's prisoners were spending more than 22 hours a day locked in their cells. (6.5)
- Pentonville continued to be an unsuitable place for young prisoners on remand to make meaningful change to their lives during their time in custody. (7.3)
- Improved management and oversight of the offender management unit (OMU) considerably improved the quality of data and resulted in fewer errors. (7.3)
- Immediate releases from court due to long periods spent on remand, as well as transfers occurring during the last 12 weeks of sentence due to national population pressures, meant some prisoners were unable to access important pre-release support. (7.5)
- The employment hub provided an impressive range of opportunities to support prisoners as they prepared for their release from prison. (7.5)

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The conditions in which prisoners must live are inhumane and contribute to poor mental health, self-harm and violence. Will the Minister commit to improving the fabric of the prison?
- The proposal to merge IMBs with HMIP will remove the unique feature, valued by prisoners, of a truly independent body of people to both monitor prisoners' welfare and address their individual concerns, every week of the year. Will the Minister explain how the proposed merger preserves this?
- How can the Minister defend the significant cuts to the prison education provision made during this reporting year?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- When will His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) develop and resource a national strategy to meet the needs of young adult prisoners, many of whom are languishing on remand for long periods?
- The 2022 Prisoners' Property Policy Framework has made no noticeable difference to the management of prisoners' property. When will this dysfunctional system be overhauled?
- When will more spaces for prisoners convicted of sexual offences be available so they can move on quickly from unsuitable prisons such as Pentonville and start offending-behaviour courses?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Will you be asking HMPPS to fund the Pentonville Academy for new officers beyond the current term of funding of April 2027?
- What will you do to increase allocations to the underused wellbeing centre, which has such a beneficial therapeutic impact on those who attend?
- By what date will the Pentonville equalities function be fully compliant with the Advancing Equality for Offenders and Children in Custody Policy Framework (implementation date 1 January 2025)? Without a regular equality forum and data scrutiny, disproportionality is harder to identify and challenge.

3.3 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
The crumbling state of Pentonville remains a serious concern to the Board.	Rolling programme of shower upgrades. Delivery of more, refurbished showers on G wing is being considered for 2026-27 funding programme. Cell window replacement programme ongoing. Projects to replace boilers and heating pipework are in design and development and will be considered for funding in 2026-27 programme.	Old showers still in use. Portakabin with 18 showers was installed in G wing exercise yard but not yet in use at end of reporting year. No update on boilers/heating pipework.
When will the Minister provide adequate financial resources to HMPPS to enable offender management units to cope?	National Workforce Delivery Project reviewed staffing models in Pentonville and some new members of staff were recruited. Governor recruited additional managers and case administrators.	OMU has greatly improved its effectiveness this year, but still remains vulnerable to mistakes owing to the complexity of the work and staffing challenges.
How will HMPPS ensure that, following the end of the maintenance contract with Gov Facility	Future contracts with maintenance providers will include enhanced replacements and key performance indicators with	Not known as GFSL are still the providers of facilities management and no new contractor has been named.

Services Limited (GFSL), robust contract arrangements will be put in place to ensure that repairs are done in a timely manner and that there are penalties for poor performance.	financial penalties governed by a Performance Credit Model.	
The transfer of property between prisons remains chaotic and the 2022 Prisoners' Property Policy Framework has made no noticeable difference.	Governors and senior leaders have been reminded of key property handling protocols.	None, in the view of the IMB.
The ACCT documentation (revised in 2022) remains overly complicated and cumbersome.	Safety Group coaching provides targeted support to staff and senior leaders.	No changes to the revised 2022 documentation have taken place.
What will HMPPS do to create more spaces in the estate for prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCoSOs)?	Some prisons have received additional funding to expand provision for accredited programme resources for PCoSOs. A new Digital Prison System approach facilitates rapid digital referrals so more appropriate transfers can be made.	PCoSOs in Pentonville still wait a long time, sometimes more than 12 months, for a transfer to an appropriate prison.
What will HMPPS do to support the Governor to stem the flow of drugs, especially psychotic substances (PS), into Pentonville?	A window replacement project is underway to strengthen security. A new testing contract for PS enhances flexibility and responsiveness for emerging drug trends.	A mixed picture at the end of the reporting year. Clearer positive progress expected when the window replacement project is completed.
What additional measures will you take to ensure that all officers wear their body worn video cameras and use them in the event of an incident, in particular where force is used?	No formal response provided.	Escalated as part of assurance and staff performance management, especially after the Urgent Notification (UN).

What will you do to ensure that a robust system is put in place to ensure that every prisoner arriving at Pentonville has a clean, fully equipped cell, a welfare call and a meaningful induction?	No formal response provided but this was picked up, and acted on, as a key part of the prison's response to the UN.	Improvement (see 4.1).
How will you implement a system for ensuring that, at a minimum, those prisoners deemed most in need of one will be allocated a key worker, and that the amount and quality of key work is monitored?	No response provided.	No improvement (see 4.3).
What will you do to increase utilisation of the wellbeing centre, which has such a beneficial impact on many of the prisoners who attend it?	No response provided.	IMB has not seen evidence of any discernible improvement (see 6.3).
How will you ensure that maintenance issues are recorded and fixed in a timely manner?	A dedicated area property operations manager works with GFSL and the Governor to monitor delivery of maintenance.	IMB has not seen evidence of any discernible improvement.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

A new governor was appointed to lead the early days in custody (EDIC) function in October 2025. There had been six previous heads of function in the preceding 18 months. Since this appointment, the IMB has observed considerable improvement.

Reception staff processed approximately 5,000 new prisoners during the reporting year. They were observed to treat new arrivals with respect, compassion, and efficiency. When asked by the IMB, prisoners confirmed that they felt they were treated with respect.

Since HMIP's unannounced inspection in July 2025, the IMB observed positive improvements in the reception process. Early in the reporting year interview rooms suffered from a lack of privacy which may have inhibited frankness when officers were undertaking a risk assessment. Work was undertaken to create two private rooms which the IMB observed to be providing a more private, calm and decent experience. Prisoners were also interviewed by a nurse and referred, if necessary, to the general practitioner (GP) who was on duty each evening. Prison orderlies (trusted prisoners who took on work to provide services that contributed to the running of the prison) were available to support the new arrivals through the reception process. Men were provided with kit, a hot meal, a shower and a welfare call. The recently repainted reception area was clean and cheerful, with easy to understand posters and a welcome message painted in a large range of languages on the wall leading to the cells.

Property belonging to prisoners arriving on transfer was scanned and logged on the prisoner's property card but too often their belongings went missing. Decency was a prison priority throughout the reporting year. A prisoner passport checklist was introduced in October 2025. The IMB noted steady improvement and, above all, increasingly consistent good standards of cell readiness. All new arrivals were entitled to expect a fully-equipped cell. Random checks by the IMB sometimes found missing individual essentials, such as a pillow, blanket, kettle or bin, but it became increasingly rare during the reporting year to find dirty cells.

There were still too many examples of cell phones not working; the system for reporting and repairing phones in cells was not consistently effective. Prisoners were not always given a welfare call on their first night, which increased anxiety and was a serious safety concern. Prisoners subject to public protection controls and restrictions presented a particular challenge in this respect, with prisoners often having to wait several days to make a call.

Induction sessions led by Insiders (trusted, trained prisoners who acted as peer mentors to new inmates, easing their transition into custody, reducing anxiety, and explaining daily routines) and supervised by an officer, were held daily on the induction wing. Most Insiders were observed to deliver these well and sympathetically but some variability was observed in terms of sufficient time for questions and recognition of the problems of non-English speakers. There were training sessions for Insiders on delivery. The induction booklet was simplified but was not yet available in different languages. The basic skills assessment (BSA),

usually completed on day two, was essential for getting a job or education. The men received an incentive payment of £10 but this was reduced to £5 part way through the reporting year. Take up was still low: only 1,732 attended in the year but this may have been because most prisoners were on remand and did not have to work.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody, vulnerable prisoners' unit

Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The reformatted weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM) continued to ensure that vulnerable prisoners were reviewed in a regular open forum. A wide range of agencies and staff contributed to discussions, and information was promptly shared with relevant parties.

There was a notable decrease in recorded incidents of self-harm this year, 435 compared to 565. The number of ACCT documents opened during the reporting year remained stable at 773, up from 769 in the previous reporting year, a reflection of the ever-challenging prison population.

The Board continues to believe that the current ACCT documentation is not fit for purpose, being overly complicated and illogically set out. When spot-checked, it was often found not to have been completed correctly, sometimes with important details omitted.

Around 44 calls a day were made to the Samaritans by prisoners from in-cell phones. For a prison the size of Pentonville, there should be 25 prisoner Listeners (trained by the Samaritans) available at all times, but this year the numbers ranged between 23 and 13 (in March 2026). This is due to the fact that Listeners cannot be put on hold and kept at Pentonville because of capacity issues in the prison estate.

Sadly, four prisoners died in the reporting year (compared with eight in the previous year). Four prevention of future deaths reports were issued by the coroner in relation to deaths which occurred between 2023 and 2025. These reports criticised how the ACCT document was used / observations carried out, the poor state of cells, the prevalence of illegal drugs, and CPR training. Seven inquests took place this reporting year, reflecting the backlog which started during Covid (2020).

The software problem affecting the prison's ability to collate statistics for response times to cell bells was fixed in mid July 2025, having been out of action for approximately 15 months. Since that time, the average time recorded across all wings was four minutes 51 seconds, but with local variations outside the five minute time limit recommended by HMIP.

The Safer Custody telephone hotline received on average 105 calls per month from concerned friends and families. There was also a dedicated contact form accessible from the gov.uk website which could be used by external parties to raise concerns. The Board has noted a marked increase in the number of people (family and friends) contacting it directly about prisoners via the IMB Secretariat.

Vulnerable prisoners

The number of vulnerable prisoners (VPs) segregated from the main population for their own safety continued to increase and by the end of the reporting year made up 15% of Pentonville's population.

Education for VPs was limited to in-cell packs for maths and English (this year saw the introduction of one face-to-face class each week in the wellbeing centre). It was possible for sentenced prisoners to participate in Open University courses but, at the end of the year, only two were enrolled. The usual work opportunities existed on the wing (ie. wing cleaner, servery worker), but off-wing work was limited to bin collections and stillage (nine and five places respectively).

Three library sessions were offered per week, which were well attended, as was a weekly chess club facilitated by "Chess in Schools & Communities" on the wing. Access to the gym was offered two days a week, and the XO bike course, an accredited bicycle mechanics course (two courses each of four weeks) were very popular.

There were on-going difficulties during the reporting year ensuring that new VPs could access induction and the BSA, as these sessions took place on the EDIC wing and VPs tended to be moved straight from reception to their dedicated accommodation. In the autumn, as the number of VPs started to exceed the spaces available on the main VP wing, new VPs were once again located on the EDIC wing, where they were able to receive both their induction and BSA in dedicated sessions.

In mid-January a new structure to the daily regime of the prison was introduced which, amongst other things, reintroduced free flow in an effort to improve predictability and daily organisation (known as the core day). VPs reported that the core day adversely impacted on them, as compared to the rest of the prison.

For example, once the allocated period (approximately 60 minutes) for showers/exercise/medication was over, they were locked in their cells as there were insufficient activities for them to attend. It was reported that they had to spend so long queuing for medication (because the nearest pharmacy hatch was at the very end of the adjoining wing) that there was often no time to also go outside for fresh air.

Consequently, the VPs spent far more time behind their doors than under the previous regime.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Data presented to HMIP during its interim review of progress (IRP) in mid-March indicated that the more predictable daily regime brought on by the introduction of the core day had already resulted in falling levels of violence. At the end of March, 15 assaults on staff and 34 prisoner cell fights/assaults had been recorded (compared with approximately 20 on staff and 37 on prisoners at the same time the previous reporting year).

The principal drivers of violence were: mental health instability; non-compliance with prison regime; gang affiliation; drug/debt disputes; and the effect of being in a high-risk location such as the CSU, or a high-density wing (one such wing had 280 prisoners spread over four landings, mostly in small, shared cells).

Approximately 7% of the Pentonville population were classified as being active in an organised crime gang. Prison intelligence suggested these prisoners coordinated and distributed illicit articles - such as weapons, phones, and drugs - which in turn contributed to violence and instability. The equivalent of one mobile phone had been found for every day of the reporting year.

Due to the rapid turnover (or 'churn') of the population, locations with high levels of violence frequently changed between different wings and landings.

Intelligence was regularly shared at internal prison meetings and, where possible, prisoners were moved internally to disrupt violence. However, with many stating they were unsafe on a majority of wings, and few spaces in the wider remand prison estate for external transfers, proactive violence reduction and/or safer custody support remained a key area of focus. Self-isolating prisoners were reviewed weekly in the SIM, with the aim of minimising the numbers and finding ways to provide as normal a daily existence as possible. At the end of the reporting year only one was isolating (a transfer in on that basis from another prison).

Increasing the number of prisoners referred to the challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) continued to be a priority, and at the end of the reporting year there were 35 men on the caseload (compared to 15 at the same time last reporting year).

The locally developed Time4Change course for prisoners aged 18-25 was halted in autumn 2025, due to issues that arose out of the HMPPS National Framework for Interventions' course accreditation process. In March 2026, there was only one dedicated forum for prisoners aged 18-21 to talk about their experiences.

Imprisonment for public protection prisoners (IPPs)

The Board is not aware of any special provision or consideration being given by the prison to IPPs this reporting year. This is concerning given the anxiety caused by the IPP prisoners' situation, and the barriers to progression that such a sentence poses.

4.4 Use of force

There were 986 reported instances of use of force (UoF) this year (compared with 1128 last year). Of these, 684 involved the use of full control and restraint.

There were 50 planned interventions (27 fewer than in the previous reporting year). 757 UoF incidents were captured on body-worn video camera (BWVC) footage (an increase of 10% on last year to 77%). Although this was positive, the Board believes this figure should be higher, as all officers are required to carry and use BWVCs. At adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules), and in internal scrutiny meetings, BWVC footage, along with any CCTV footage, was regularly examined.

PAVA incapacitant spray was introduced at Pentonville in July 2023, but was not used at all in the reporting year 2023-24. In the current reporting year, however, it was used 13 times, compared with only 3 times in 2024-25.

This reporting year there were no formal UoF meetings. Instead, incidents were scrutinised and triaged by selected members of staff, with the most concerning incidents referred to the deputy governor.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The problem of illicit items, particularly drugs, coming into prisons is a national problem with new drug formulas, sophisticated drone technology and a ready market. At Pentonville, gate security with rub-down searches and X-ray body scanning of staff and visitor bags continued and was regularly and rigorously

applied. During the reporting period two tier-two searches of cells and common areas were conducted with the assistance of external search teams. These resulted in numerous finds and the removal of approx. £70,000 worth of contraband. One member of staff was suspended, with one dismissal linked to illicit items. The searching of staff, visitors and the prison by specially trained dogs continued. It is likely that the enhanced security at the gate led to spikes in other smuggling methods being deployed, such as drones.

Some cell windows on upper landings were vandalised to allow drone access. Once discovered, they were sealed and not able to be used. A new design for a more secure window is in development. In reception, X-ray body scanners were used for all arrivals with a positive indication rate of approximately 5%. The use of this was reviewed at the monthly tripartite meeting which had been set up to co-ordinate actions of the security, safety and drug strategy functions. Each week a stability report was produced which contained information about finds of illicit items. In the reporting period, there were 894 incidents including the following finds: 312 drugs, 364 phones, 205 weapons, and 27 alcoholic drinks. The last two included improvised items made in the prison.

Mandatory drug testing (MDT) continued but varied from month to month, depending on staff levels, and showed a steady level of 34% with peaks of 41% in July 2025 in positive results. The Board was concerned about the increase in men collapsing under the influence of PS, with many needing paramedic attention at the prison or, in severe cases, hospitalisation.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Accommodation

The prison was originally built in 1842 to accommodate 520 prisoners in single cells. By the end of March 2026, the unlock figure was 1,180 with most men sharing a cell. Pentonville is one of the most overcrowded prisons in the country.

Men were living in 12 x 8ft cells with a metal bunk bed, a table, chair, cupboard and a toilet with no effective screening. The crumbling fabric of the building was susceptible to continual infestations of mice, cockroaches, flies and rats with blitzes by a pest control company providing only short-term respite.

The ageing fabric and infrastructure of the prison were evidenced in the regular applications from prisoners to the Board. The Board noted that remedial repairs often took a long time to be completed and offered only a temporary fix to systems urgently in need of complete renovation. As reported by the Board in previous years, there was little accountability for the slow or inadequate performance of the maintenance contractor, GFSL.

Following HMIP's inspection in July 2025, the Board observed a relative improvement in the cleanliness of cells and standard and availability of cell furnishings in first night cells for new arrivals. There was some evidence of improvement on other wings with a noticeable effort to ensure that any mold was treated and cells repainted.

Several showers had been renovated, but others were observed to have uneven and potentially hazardous flooring, blocked drains and missing cubicle doors.

In-cell TVs and telephones enabled men to contact the outside world. However, the Board noted frequent issues with broken phones, not only in-cell but also on the wings. The system for reporting and fixing the phones appeared to be unclear to both prisoners and staff and resulted in regular distress and frustration for the men trying to keep in contact with the outside.

The potential health hazards of living with vermin, together with the lack of privacy and cramped conditions, are neither decent nor humane.

Food

The rat infestation in the main kitchen which had been a major issue for the first three months of the last reporting year did not reappear. Pest issues continued to be monitored by a pest controller on a weekly basis and where pests were noticed, it was reported and pest controllers informed so that action could be taken.

Food-related complaints had reduced to 62 in 2025-26 compared to 80 the previous year. Most issues related to food were addressed via the Pentonville prisoner platform (PPP) meetings and directly to catering staff who visited serveries on the wings.

Eating a healthy diet is important for managing and preventing conditions such as diabetes, as well as for supporting the health of prisoners who have previously been homeless or substance misusers. A dietician continued to be employed by Practice

Plus Group (PPG) to work at Pentonville and some other London prisons. Their clinic started in February and was held every other week. A dietician assistant was also being recruited to the team. Kitchen worker numbers were sometimes insufficient due to stringent security checks, transfers or releases. From routine sampling of the food by Board members, the quality was satisfactory.

The Food in Prisons' Policy Framework was implemented in February 2026 containing mandatory requirements for prison food to meet set nutritional standards and quality. For example, menus must focus on reducing salt and sugar with a recommendation of no more than 70g of processed meat. By the end of the reporting year, there was no change to menus as the pre-existing contract with Bidfood (negotiated centrally by MOJ) was still in place and so Pentonville's kitchen manager did not have the raw ingredients to be able to produce the new menus.

5.2 Segregation

Of the 11 cells in the CSU, there was usually at least one cell out of order due to 'dirty protests' (where a prisoner has chosen to defecate or urinate in a cell without using the facilities provided); vandalism; or the presence of vermin and fly infestations. Very old drainage regularly caused blocked and overflowing drains, leading to extremely unpleasant conditions for both prisoners and officers. The toilets and sinks in the cells were stained, with paint flaking off the walls. Some cells were repainted but the Board remained concerned about the conditions.

There were 325 segregations over the reporting year with an average stay of 5.5 days. Eight 42-day reviews (the limit allowed without external authorisation) were held compared to only one in the previous reporting year. Special accommodation cells (where items such as furniture, bedding and sanitation are absent in the interests of safety) were used 11 times, as compared to five last year.

Segregated prisoners were visited daily by the duty Governor, healthcare staff and a member of the chaplaincy team. Members of the Board visited the CSU several times each week. Prisoners were offered radios (availability dependent), activity packs and books. All segregated prisoners were offered daily exercise and showers, although sometimes staffing levels meant this was impossible due to prisoners requiring multi-officers present at unlock. The CSU regularly held prisoners with challenging and volatile behaviour. The Board observed that the staff demonstrated high levels of patience, compassion and care towards those in their charge. Good order and discipline (GOAD) reviews (where it was deemed whether a prisoner who had been segregated due to disruptive behaviour should remain segregated) were regularly monitored by the Board. These reviews were observed to be fair, detailed and thoughtfully managed, with the Board agreeing with the decisions made.

Separation, monitoring and review group meetings were held quarterly to ensure that the prison service order on segregation was implemented and adhered to.

Adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) were held most days for offences committed by prisoners. There was an average of 15 per day, up by only two on last year. More serious offences were dealt with by the independent adjudicator (IA), who conducted sessions approximately every three weeks. There was no backlog of cases to be heard by the IA at the end of the reporting year.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

Staff and prisoner relationships

The PPP was a constructive forum for prisoner communication with the establishment. It met monthly, with an informal agenda-setting process in advance. This format changed in January when, to improve staff/prisoner communications, weekly wing forums were introduced feeding a wider range of prisoner views into the meeting. At the same time, heads of residence took overall responsibility for the platform. A more structured environment, power point presentations of minutes and a rolling action plan encouraged accountability from the prison and conferred greater respect on the role of prisoner representatives.

The platform highlighted and resolved problems with food quality and menus; representations about visits resulted in change; and it was used for consultation about the core day. Complaints about the domestic hour (during which time Monday-Friday prisoners were able to shower, take fresh air and deal with administrative matters) were raised in meetings in February and March. Other problems proved more intractable: OMU sentencing delays, prompt unlocking for activities, regime curtailment, and Listener numbers.

The Board observed multiple examples of positive relations between staff and prisoners - daily on the wings, in ACCT reviews and other structured engagements, and most consistently on specialist units. Many prisoners however reported poor relations – being assaulted, victimised or ignored – to the Board. The most common tensions observed on the wings and raised in applications (prisoners' written submissions) to the Board stemmed from staff not being able or willing to respond to prisoner requests for legitimate help or information, worsened when staffing levels were reduced.

Complaints about not being treated with respect, and a lack of good inter-personal skills in officers, arose regularly in PPP meetings and poor staff/prisoner relationships were widely raised in the new wing forums.

Key work

There was no operational key worker model during the reporting year. Some key work sessions were provided, notably on the dedicated unit for prisoners with neurodiversity. The core day implemented in January provided specific regime times for key work, in dedicated slots and during structured wing activity (SWA): defined as purposeful use of time out of cell overseen by staff, such as forums, board games, or key work sessions). However, most of these slots were not filled. Plans had been laid at the end of the reporting year for the training of 49 officers to provide key work to priority cohorts.

5.4 Equality and diversity

In March 2026, the prison's population was found to have the following characteristics:

- Ethnic origin: 38% white, 29% black, 15% Asian, 6% mixed ethnicity, 12% other.
- Religion/belief: 43% identified as Christian, 40% as Muslim, 7% other religions, 10% no religion/no information.

- Age: of note, 22% aged 18-25 years; 7% aged 55 and older (prisoners aged 55 are treated as 'older').

A total of 47 prisoners had a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) arising from their disability (a PEEP provides assistance for those who cannot get themselves out of the prison unaided in an emergency.) There were five prisoner care buddies approved (and paid) to assist prisoners with their personal care.

Data showed that almost 50% of UoF incidents were on young black males (aged 18-25), arising predominantly from prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff assaults. A total of 114 discrimination incident reporting forms were received over the reporting year, with only one upheld.

Given the age and fabric of the building, it was often difficult for the needs of disabled prisoners to be met by the prison. With only two Disability Discrimination Act-approved cells wide enough for wheelchair users and a lack of step-free access to two of the four exercise yards, a number of prisoners with mobility issues were being held in locations where they were unable to access fresh air.

Furthermore, some areas of the prison which offered activities were inaccessible to them. An ageing prison population exacerbated the problems, but younger prisoners were also often observed to have significant and complex physical and health needs.

The neurodiversity unit (NDU), now in its fourth year, can house approximately 50 prisoners. The NDU supported the needs of those who found it most difficult to cope on normal location, mostly those with autism or a learning disability, but included prisoners with hearing loss and dementia. In the Board's view, the unit continued to be a vital initiative given it is estimated that up to half of the national prison population is neurodiverse.

In terms of specialist groups aimed at prisoners with different protected characteristics, the Board was only aware of prisoner forums for YA, which started to be held in the last few months of the reporting year. There was an absence of formal gatherings for those from other protected groups. Part way through the reporting year the staffing arrangements for the equalities team changed. This appears to have had the effect of (i) reducing the predictability of in-person equality meetings taking place (only one in the past 12 months), and (ii) robust scrutiny of relevant data in open forum.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team was made up of employed, sessional and volunteer chaplains, supported by a group of about 70 lay volunteers. There was a welcome boost to the number of imams during the reporting year, providing much-needed additional capacity to facilitate delivery of three Muslim services on a Friday.

The prison has a chapel and a mosque. There is also a multi-faith room which had been used as a synagogue for a long time and a welcome development this reporting year was the partitioning of the room to provide a dedicated space for Jewish worship. For the past couple of years, the mosque had been unusable due to a leaking roof. The Board was very pleased that repairs were finally completed with new carpets installed and that the space was once again used for services and groups for Muslim prisoners. However, the washing area which had been poorly

installed in recent times, was still awaiting refurbishment, meaning prisoners had to wash in their cells prior to attending services.

Subject to security checks, all prisoners who wished to attend one of the faith services each week were permitted to do so. There were Roman Catholic, Church of England, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu services, and figures for March showed a total monthly attendance of around 1550. However, there were still reports of prisoners not being unlocked for services, which caused upset and frustration. In addition, prisoners with disabilities/mobility issues could not attend services when the lift broke down, a situation which in the Board's view was unacceptable. As a result, these prisoners would be seen individually by chaplaincy team members.

The team continued to provide extensive support to prisoners and their families. All new arrivals were visited on their first day in the prison and there was a rota to ensure that all prisoners requesting visits were seen regularly. A chaplaincy member visited the CSU every day and almost all prisoners on an ACCT were seen once a week. Support was provided to prisoners and families at times of bereavement and terminal illness, and in the event of a death in custody support was also provided to affected staff.

Members of the team ran groups for prisoners and the chaplaincy worked closely with London City Mission to provide Through the Gate support (provided to people before and after they leave prison, with the aim of reducing reoffending and helping individuals successfully resettlement in the community), including with housing and accommodation.

There was effective liaison with the kitchen over festivals, including Ramadan, and the Board's view was that these were managed well.

5.6 Incentives schemes

The Board received few applications (prisoners' written submissions to the IMB) about the incentives scheme. However, prisoners on the enhanced (top) level of the scheme often felt there was insufficient difference between them and other prisoners, and the Board agreed. In addition, privileges were afforded to prisoners on the drug-free wing that were not offered to enhanced prisoners elsewhere in the prison. This was unfair and demotivating to those not on that wing. Pentonville is committed to reviewing the scheme and has asked senior officers and prisoners for ideas on improvements.

Basic status includes removal a prisoner's in-cell TV, except in exceptional circumstances, and a 50% reduction in SWA.

5.7 Complaints

Monitoring of the timeliness of responses to complaints made to the prison continued, as did the monthly dissemination of detailed analysis of the profile of complaints. In several months 100% of responses were sent on time, with the lowest percentage being 95%. Property was consistently the highest source of complaints, followed by residential issues.

Quality auditing of responses by the business hub continued, using small samples each month. For every month for which data was made available, 100% of responses were found by the prison to be thorough and to address the issue raised,

which was an improvement on the last reporting year. However, the IRP in March 2026 found that some investigations reviewed “lacked sufficient enquiry”, which aligns with the Board’s findings that some responses seen were inadequate or unhelpful. The percentage of complaints upheld was usually less than 10%. The quality audit process also found that there were problems with responses failing to address prisoners appropriately by name or title, despite monthly reminders from managers of the importance of doing so.

5.8 Property

Property is one of the most complained about issues. Both the Board and the prison received more applications about property than the year before. The rise was likely linked to the introduction of the security requirement that all property received into the establishment be X-rayed prior to being processed and delivered (increasing the length of time taken for items to reach prisoners).

Transfer of property between prisons remained a particular problem, causing considerable anxiety for prisoners for whom these items may have been their only belongings and/or have sentimental value. To try to improve the situation, Pentonville used establishment ‘pool’ vehicles (when they and staff were available) to deliver property to prisons where prisoners had transferred (without their property). However, in the vast majority of cases the Board has dealt with, no positive changes have been observed since the implementation of the 2022 Prisoners’ Property Policy Framework.

A review of property-related processes was undertaken in the reporting year, which confirmed these remained appropriate for reducing complaints when the unit was adequately resourced. As a result, a new permanent member of staff was allocated and started on 30 March.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The 22-bed in-patient healthcare unit served prisoners with complex and challenging health issues, almost exclusively mental health-related. Board members visited regularly and observed that medical staff and prison officers dealt sensitively and appropriately with patients. Generally, men expressed satisfaction with their treatment. The unit appeared well managed, with a supportive and cohesive team.

Mental health services were well staffed. The matron appeared to be making a significant difference to the quality of service and governance. Recruitment overall was positive, reaching 85% and covering critical areas of the service. A multi-disciplinary EDIC referral meeting took place most days to discuss every new arrival and draw up care plans for the prisoner's early days, as necessary. Onward referrals were made to relevant teams. As all disciplines were represented, there was ownership of care decisions, which the Board considered worked well.

'Call Phill' (a prisoner health information and liaison helpline for concerned relatives to contact the healthcare team) was very well used (between 29 to 72 calls per month) enabling healthcare to receive important information which ensured patients were kept safe.

Healthcare had its own system of applications and complaints. Applications were collected from the wings every day and urgent ones prioritised, with response times to lower-level concerns improving to an average of 10 working days by the end of the reporting year. However, prisoners' applications were not always acknowledged so prisoners were not aware if their application had been received and processed. Complaints worked much better with an acknowledgment letter placed under the cell door. Pentonville was an early adopter of a new Practice Plus Group (PPG) 30-day required response time to more formal complaints, down from 60 days.

6.2 Physical healthcare

A full-time patient engagement lead liaised with patients to undertake health promotion work. They produced a monthly newsletter for patients, asked for feedback via surveys, held patient forums, and linked up with outside organisations, including NHS England and a prostate cancer charity.

Over the reporting year, there were external visitors delivering training and group sessions to staff and prisoners, including about epilepsy and sickle cell disorder.

The Board had no concerns about waiting times for routine appointments for prisoners to see a GP, optician, dentist, physiotherapist or podiatrist. Abdominal aortic aneurism checks for older prisoners took place every quarter. Release and transfer staff supported numerous complex patients through the gate and on release from prison, including by accompanying prisoners to appointments on the day of release.

6.3 Mental health

Mental health professionals visited CSU prisoners and attended GOAD reviews, where they provided mental health advice and support. In addition, they worked

closely with CSU staff to put care plans in place for those with mental health needs. Mental health staff also provided input to the weekly SIM.

Pentonville had the highest number of transfers to secure units amongst London prisons. This was in part down to the consultant psychiatrists at Pentonville having good links with local hospitals. However, despite this, the 28-day best practice deadline from secure units agreeing to accept a patient to the day they were moved was rarely met (due to factors beyond the control of the prison, namely availability of external beds) and so severely unwell men had to remain longer in Pentonville awaiting a place.

A variety of therapy sessions were run in the wellbeing centre for those particularly struggling with life in prison. These were led by psychologists and occupational health practitioners, who also visited the in-patient unit. The most stable groups of men attending the centre were permitted fresh air in a small grassy outside area with a basketball hoop, and undertook the gardening. The Board observed that the centre continued to be an underused resource in terms of numbers attending, due to unreliable unlocking/ escorting by the prison.

6.4 Social care

There were many reception prisoners (particularly older, vulnerable prisoners) who required triage by social care and then referral to the local authority for either occupational therapy and/or Care Act assessments. Generally, this worked quite well, but there were often long delays in seeing occupational therapists or social workers. Social care assistants supported the prisoners in the interim and arrangements were in place to set up peer supporters or buddies, organised by the equality team. Good links had been formed with Islington council regarding social care and there was a monthly meeting between the council and healthcare to discuss all social care cases.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

A variety of different changes to the daily regime were implemented during the reporting year, the most significant of which was the core day. The aim was to create a consistent daily regime, capable of being delivered consistently.

A 'domestic' hour in the morning was allocated for exercise in the yard, showers, collecting medication and administrative tasks. Prisoners complained to the Board that it was hard to fit everything into this hour. This period was not intended for association (ie socialising): there was no association period Mondays to Fridays.

A new weekend pattern provided upwards of two hours of association on both Saturday and Sunday – allocated twice a day on all wings except those with two distinct cohorts of prisoners to manage (for safety reasons). This was an improvement in weekend time out of cell, and significantly so for prisoners on wings receiving two periods a day. Slots for SWA were built into the regime, but by the end of the reporting year there were few activities to fill them.

Three specialist wings provided greater time out of cell – the NDU, Unity wing (a small unit based on the Scandinavian prison philosophy of community accountability and stable staffing, overseen by Oxford university researchers, and which opened in early 2026) and the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) unit. The restricted regime for VP prisoners was

inequitable, and with limited access to activities, and prisoners on the wing felt that the core day had further curtailed their time out of cell.

The monthly percentage of overall purposeful activity undertaken against the maximum capacity was 61% (600 places could be allocated each am and pm). This rose to 70% and 68% in February and March 2026. Around 350 other sessions took place on weekdays - gym (the largest proportion), legal and social visits, probation appointments, drug/alcohol support and religious services.

Prisoners complained that unlocking for activities, education and appointments was unreliable resulting in missed sessions or delays. Implementation of a free flow system in early 2026 increased independence of movement. Prisoner unemployment had reduced by the end of the reporting year.

However, time out of cell remained a serious concern, with many prisoners spending 22 hours behind cell doors (ref 3.2 Main areas for development addressed to the Minister).

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

All prisoners were screened for substance misuse on arrival and given early access to clinical and psychosocial support delivered by Practice Plus Group and Phoenix Futures.

There was an ongoing problem of medical emergencies being called, with men needing medical assistance including ambulance attendance, through drug overdose, particularly PS. Several such incidents were observed by IMB members as was the smell of drugs on the landings. From April 2025, all these types of incidents were counted and reported daily to counter staff complacency. The team was responsive and Phoenix Futures ran wing surgeries. In response to the prevalence of PS, a programme was started to train staff to administer the nasal spray of Naloxone in cases of overdose. This started on one wing and all new cohorts of officers received training. It is planned to ensure that all staff are trained.

As in last year's report, prisoners on the ISFL wing, which has 60 places, earn privileges through work, voluntary drug testing and adhering to a behaviour code. In this reporting year it was decided that Phoenix Futures would be responsible for recommending who transferred to this wing. This ISFL unit remained an important part of the prison's recovery offer, providing a structured, abstinence-focused environment supported by purposeful activity and a rehabilitative approach to relapse. In February and March, an additional 180 hours of paid staff time was delivered to provide further therapeutic and recovery-focused activities.

The focus on reducing the demand for drugs continued with treatment provision, access to meaningful activity, and the promotion of the ISFL. Employment and education were recognised as key protective factors.

MDT rates remained high during the reporting period, highlighting the continued scale of substance misuse within the prison and informing both treatment and security responses. Efforts by the prison to enforce proper officer supervision at all times of pharmacy hatches, to prevent the diversion of prescribed medication at the point of dispensing, were not successful and the Board frequently observed one or more prisoners crowding around the hatch without any supervision.

The tripartite strategic risk meeting, bringing together the security, safety and drug strategy functions (referred to in 4.5), was a positive move to support the drug strategy in the prison.

The prison remained committed to increasing the number of prisoners who received treatment in the community when released. Assisting prisoners to obtain accommodation for their first night was a crucial part of resettlement to encourage them to continue receiving support.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

On an average day there were 550 activity places every morning and afternoon in education, work and skills (EWS) which, taken as a whole, was enough to occupy all prisoners on a part-time basis. The long-standing problems with attendance and time-keeping were partly explained by the high percentage of remand prisoners who frequently lacked the motivation to attend. However, there were delays with allocations to activities (and long waiting lists), and in getting men unlocked to attend. This was reflected in the most recent HMIP report, where purposeful activity scored 1 ('outcomes for prisoners are poor').

The expectation was that with the introduction of the Core Day and free-flow, punctuality on courses/workshops would improve, and tutors reported that this was generally the case. Furthermore, that if men were not attending activities they would be locked up after the domestic hour and this would incentivise them to participate in activities. It was still early days since the Core Day was introduced, but by the end of the reporting year the data indicated that so far this was proving harder to achieve.

By the end of March, attendance against capacity remained low, averaging 63% in both November 2025 and March 2026. In education, attendance against capacity for the same period averaged 40% in November 2025 but had increased to 47% by the end of March 2026. Factors affecting these figures include teacher sickness and prisoners unable to attend due to the prison changing the regime for security reasons.

The Board remained concerned that there were no activities offered on a Friday afternoon (owing to Muslim prayers taking place for the considerable numbers who wished to attend) and so the weekend regime for the rest of the prison effectively started at lunchtime.

The education department offered a wide range of courses. Core subjects included English, maths, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Vocational skills included business studies, painting and decorating, the construction skills certificate scheme, health and safety, and radio production. Board members observed that prisoners attending classes engaged well and showed a positive attitude to learning.

The education contract with Novus finished in September and was replaced by People Plus. The prison reported that rising cost pressures impacted the proportion of the overall budget they could spend on education. The Board observed that this resulted in 20% less provision than previously.

In the context of the Urgent Notification this increased the challenges facing prison managers to improve their HMIP scores. To ease the effects of the cuts to the overall education provision, the prison reduced class times in the morning by one hour: from 8.30am-11.30am to 9.30am-11.30am. The rationale was that prisoners could be brought to education any time between 8.30am-9.30am to support the Core Day and improve the overall punctual arrival of learners. However, there was still one less hour of teaching in the morning than before.

Recently published figures from the MoJ reveal the impact of the funding cuts on Pentonville:

Dates	Planning teaching hours	% reduction
April 2025-Sept 2025	10,107.35	nil
Oct 2025 -Mar 2026	8,345.50	17
April 2026-Mar-2027	16,219.50	20

Given the scale of these reductions, the actions being taken by the prison to improve allocation and attendance were all the more important.

In addition to the core curriculum, enrichment activities were offered by external providers on a voluntary basis. These included University of Westminster (criminology), UCL, Museum of London (project publishing a booklet of prisoners work), Urban Lawyers (workshops and a Dragons' Den style competition), and debating and public speaking.

Library

The library was open Monday to Thursday (am and pm) and Friday (am only). It provided a pleasant environment and a valuable resource for prisoners. Since the introduction of the core day, the head librarian reported that punctuality had improved and sessions were better attended. In addition, there were a variety of reader development activities. Reading groups were held (monthly) for VPs and for the NDU; and a Samaritans' Listeners' forum arranged ad hoc monthly events in line with National Year of Reading 2026.

7.2 Vocational training, work, gym

Industries and workshops

Industries generated income for the prison and included:

- Textiles – production of bedding for use within the prison estate
- Print - producing a wide range of materials for HMPPS
- Recycling – processes waste generated by the prison

These provided prisoners with opportunities to work and learn new skills. During 2025, industries and cleaning started to offer accredited qualifications (at open college network entry level).

Workshops facilitated by the voluntary/not for profit sector included:

- Liberty Kitchen*, which taught prisoners culinary and business skills and was recognised with a Princess Royal training award (also featured on the TV programme Good Morning Britain). Prisoners obtained an SFEDI award (small firms enterprise development initiative) and a food safety qualification. It supported men in the community on their release and offered ad-hoc employment when catering for events.

- XO Bikes* used donated bikes to teach prisoners to undertake repairs leading to a bronze Velotech certificate. On release they were supported to obtain a higher level silver or gold certificate. In the past two years, XO Bikes ran 17 courses and trained over 80 men.
- Stitch up project, facilitated by Central Saint Martins, was a new project, teaching sewing skills two days per week to five prisoners.

*These projects offered “through the gate” support (provided to people as they transition from prison back into the community). However, as Pentonville is an 80% remand prison, it was not always possible to arrange the courses to tie in with a prisoner’s release date.

Gym

The department was fully staffed this year with nine physical education instructors responsible for four gyms and one sports hall. Compared with similar local remand prisons, Pentonville is ranked second highest for the number of hours of exercise and nationally recognised courses offered to its prisoners. In addition to the mainstream courses detailed below, the department has created its own 6-week drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment programme for prisoners engaging with Phoenix Futures.

The second largest gym needs investment to create more showers for the approximately 30 men who can use it at one time (there are currently only two and they do not always work). If the men’s allocated time for a shower on their home wing was first thing in the morning (i.e. before attending gym), they were not able to shower again until the following day. This was not decent when almost all men were sharing small, poorly ventilated cells.

The gym department coordinated a wide variety of courses including:

- Level 2 gym instructor courses at NVQ Level 2, which can be used to gain employment upon release;
- Arsenal twinning project courses, with each participant receiving a Level 1 FA football coaching qualification and gaining access to further support from the Arsenal Hub on release;
- General supervised gym sessions for all residential areas, including healthcare inpatients.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Offender management unit

At the beginning of the reporting year the OMU continued to experience difficulties in handling its workload. There was a worrying backlog of sentence calculations and there were a number of serious mistakes, including eight releases in error between April and mid-October 2025.

In July 2025, HMIP identified the OMU as one area causing greatest concern. Subsequently a number of initiatives were put in place. There were two additional senior posts and an offsite team of five who triaged all incoming

emails. The result was that up to 80% of the emails were handled by the offsite team, thereby enabling the onsite staff team to work more effectively. Further actions resulted in an excellent grasp of data with a computerised tracking system for managing sentence calculation, providing consistent checking processes so that managers and the team were aware of the status of each prisoner. Previously the OMU did not have the data or an explanation for the backlog. This reduced from 63 cases in September to as low as 24 at the end of the reporting year. There was some fluctuation, with single figures registered in October and March.

There were no releases in error after November, apart from one in January where a local court took responsibility. The number of unlawful detentions decreased considerably with a 75% reduction in cases since August.

At the IRP in March, HMIP found that good progress had been made. This was supported by the number of IMB applications about the department which fell from 103 in the first six months of the reporting year to 67 in the last six months.

Legal visits

These were held either in person in the visits hall or via video link. The IMB received very few applications from prisoners about problems encountered booking or having legal visits. Delays in allocating telephone PINs (personal identification numbers) restricted some prisoners' early access to legal advice from their cells.

Young adults

At the end of March there were 276 young adults (YA) in Pentonville, which is 22.9% of the population. Further to feedback from the National Framework for Interventions, Pentonville was working with HMPPS psychologists to reconsider effective interventions for YA who might previously have engaged in the Time4Change programme. In the interim, since December, the establishment was engaging prisoners aged 18-21 through weekly wing forums. One of the main focuses was violence reduction on the wing, but the forum was also a space to better support the YA in whatever ways they feel would be helpful to them.

The Board was concerned that 22-25 year olds did not have a dedicated place to meet with staff and engage in rehabilitation owing to the distinct age bands that Time4Change and the wing forums worked to. The PPP meetings were also a means of engaging, supporting and consulting with YA. With so few dedicated facilities or opportunities for this cohort, and a lack of coherent national strategy, the Board remains concerned that young adults continue to be held in Pentonville.

7.4 Family contact

Social visits took place daily, with the charity PACT running the visitor centre. The online booking system appeared to work well, with only occasional issues brought to the attention of the Board. The children's play area was well-used, with access to video games at the longer designated family visits. Periodic feedback meetings were held between the prison, PACT and any family members who wished to attend. On the occasion that the IMB observed, two female visitors raised: a lack of healthy food options, alleged rude behaviour from staff, and the absence of a covered area while waiting to be let in to be searched. Prisoners' ability to predictably make welfare calls upon arrival in Pentonville improved. The Board also observed staff and chaplaincy

volunteers helping the most vulnerable to make extra calls if they lacked the financial means to fund them themselves.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Resettlement planning was under the remit of both the pre-release team and the employment hub. The pre-release team was part of the probation service, and their role was to contact prisoners on arrival and refer them to appropriate support agencies 12 weeks before release. Most agencies worked with both sentenced and remand prisoners.

The following agencies provided resettlement support as follows:

- **Catch 22** - supported remand prisoners with financial issues, liaising with banks, housing associations, and other agencies.
- **St Mungo's** supported both remand and sentenced prisoner with housing needs.
- **PACT** (Prison Advice and Care Trust) worked with prisoners to strengthen family connections.
- **StandOut** ran a three-week pre-release course, including CV writing and mock interviews, during which money management, disclosure and working with the probation service were discussed. They also offered ongoing support whilst still in the prison, maintained contact if a prisoner was transferred and offered open-ended community support upon release.

The Employment Hub hosted, amongst other events:

- seven self-employment events of which four were delivered by the Prison Employment Lead, two by staff from HMRC and one by CAFRAIL; and
- 15 employer events over the year, including the June Job Fair which was attended by 11 employers and 46 prisoners.

The Employment Hub was regularly used by partner agencies such as Catch 22, the Criminal Law project, the DWP and Shannon Trust. The Catch 22 remand team were the most frequent users of the Employment Hub during this reporting period and regularly ran Life Skills and Intuitive Thinking Skills courses with the remand cohort.

Attendance in the Employment Hub and at on-wing pop-ups included 753 men - the frequency of these events increased both engagement with the Employment Hub service and its visibility.

Over this reporting period the identification and banking administrator, assisted in applying for 37 bank accounts for sentenced prisoners with banking partner Santander, applied for 105 birth certificates (for both remand and sentenced prisoners) and one provisional driving licence.

The Employment Hub had 30 provisional job offers made to men through job-matching work-ready candidates to employers in the community. It also held training sessions with employers coming to the prison to deliver industry-recognised qualifications, such as the temporary traffic management basic course card (TTMBC) delivered by Marlborough Highways.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	15
Total number of visits to the establishment	490

Applications to the IMB

Many prisoners submitted applications with multiple problems, and frequently more than one application in any given week. In order to manage the Board's resources, prisoners were advised that the Board would not take on more than one or two key issues for them each week. This table therefore considerably under-represents the level of need of the Pentonville prisoner population.

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	55	77
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	9	24
C	Equality	10	8
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	57	53
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	65	55
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	42	28
F	Food and kitchens	25	20
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	158	147
H1	Property within the establishment	60	68
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	50	49
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	22	6
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	123	170
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	76	48
K	Transfers	10	10
L	Miscellaneous	103	59
	Total number of applications	865	822

Annex A

Service providers

- Optometry: The Prison Opticians Company
- Dental services: Smile Dental Care
- Podiatry and physiotherapy: Practice Plus Group MSK (a sub-division of PPG)
- Mental health: North London NHS Foundation Trust coordinates the work of Practice Plus primary mental health nurses, with its own secondary mental health, in-patient and day-care services.
- Substance misuse programme: Phoenix Futures
- Gym qualifications: Active IQ
- Visitors' centre: PACT
- Resettlement support:
 - Only Connect
 - Bounce Back
 - StandOut
 - St Mungo's
 - Catch22
 - JobCentre Plus



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