

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Coldingley

**For reporting year
1 August 2025 to 31 July 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 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 establishment¹

HMP Coldingley (hereafter 'Coldingley') is a men's category C resettlement and training prison, located in Bisley near Woking, Surrey. It opened in 1969, and was one of the earliest prisons of its type. It has functioned as this category throughout.

The baseline certified normal accommodation (CNA) is 513. No prisoner is under the age of 21. The prison has remained full for three successive reporting years, with a resident population ranging from 505 to 513 prisoners.

Coldingley has the following accommodation:

- **A wing:** an old main accommodation wing lacking in-cell sanitation housing 93 prisoners with three double cells. It has an induction landing
- **B wing:** a refurbished main accommodation wing re-opened in May 2024 with in-cell sanitation, housing 93 prisoners with three double cells
- **C wing:** an old main accommodation wing closed for refurbishment since May 2024 – refurbishment currently delayed
- **D wing:** an old main accommodation wing lacking in-cell sanitation housing 93 prisoners with three double cells
- **E wing:** two storey accommodation opened in 2008. It houses up to 162 prisoners in four zones, with an ISFL zone and a zone allocated to lifer and long-sentenced prisoners, all have in-cell sanitation including showers
- **F wing:** a separate annex to A wing of five double cells
- **G wing:** 62 outdoor single-occupant pods with full sanitation. It opened as temporary accommodation in 2020; it received planning permission as permanent accommodation in June 2025.
- the **Care and Separation Unit (CSU)** has 11 cells with sanitation; one cell has recently been adapted for constant observation.

There are four main training workshops, a technology and education centre (TEC) and administration and maintenance facility areas.

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

The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant section of this report.

Safety

- The availability of drugs and their widespread usage at Coldingley is a major concern. (4.5)
- The lack of systematic searching of staff and visitors may be a significant contributor to the availability of drugs and other illicit items within Coldingley. (4.5)
- There has been a 25% increase in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults when compared to the previous reporting period, with much of it appearing to be related to the illicit economy. (4.3)
- The lengthy induction process, extended because of increased churn, leads to boredom and a possible link with poor behaviour and drug taking. (4.3)
- Body worn cameras were used in 88% of the use of force incidents in the year, the monthly variations indicate their use requires consistent reinforcement. (4.4)
- The Restorative Justice programme is being used in a positive attempt to understand and tackle the increase in prisoner-on-prisoner assault. (4.3)
- Coldingley makes good use of local support plans for those prisoners who may be going through difficulties such as a family illness, bereavement, being under threat within the prison or progression setbacks. (4.2)

Fair and humane treatment

- A third of prisoners have no sink or toilet in their cell and depend on an antiquated central unlocking system to access either of these overnight. The work to refurbish these cells has been stalled for the last two years. (5.1)
- There have been several incidents of Legionella being found in the hot water systems. This issue is ongoing. (5.1)
- The time taken to allocate a key worker to new arrivals has increased to 22 days from three days in the last reporting period. The number of key work sessions is down by 37% year on year. (5.3)
- Based on applications to IMB property transfer between prisons remains a significant issue although property issues inside Coldingley appear to be reduced. (5.8)
- There has been a focus by prison leadership on housekeeping and cleanliness. This has had a very positive effect on the appearance of the prison. (5.1)
- Improvements in communication are actively encouraged by the Governor through better leadership visibility, weekly video updates and proactive notices to prisoners. (5.3)

Health and wellbeing

- The number of prisoners found under the influence of drugs or alcohol has risen significantly during the reporting year. In addition, 36% of random drug tests gave a positive result in the period August 2025 to June 2026. This is a strong indication of the availability of drugs in Coldingley. (6.6)
- Feedback from prisoners on healthcare services remains generally positive. (6.1)

- There were no unplanned lockdowns in the reporting year, reflecting good levels of staffing and staff retention. (6.5)
- Prisoners in the re-established incentivised substance free living zone on E wing have spoken positively about this environment and its success. (6.6)

Progression and resettlement

- Budget cuts at the beginning of 2026 led to experienced teaching staff leaving the education provider causing a hiatus in the delivery of some programmes. (7.1)
- The Building Choices offending behavioural programme has still not started at Coldingley, hindering the progression of prisoners who have this on their sentence plans. (7.1)
- The level of churn (high levels of prisoner transfers around the estate/lots entering and leaving) combined with the increase in number of short-term recall prisoners is influencing progression and resettlement, with some prisoners transferring before completing courses and short-term prisoners having insufficient time to meaningfully engage with resettlement processes. (7.3)
- The Board questions whether work in the headphone workshop and much of the work in the printing workshop is purposeful activity that promotes successful resettlement. (7.2)
- The peer led courses and programmes which make use of prisoner skills and experience have received positive feedback from prisoners. Work undertaken by the small prisoner repair team is evident both within the prison and the outside spaces. (7.2)

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- It is unacceptable that 35% of prisoners in Coldingley still have no in cell sanitation. The collapse of the previous contractor and re-letting of its contracts has halted the work installing in-cell sanitation in the older wings since September 2024. What can be done to prioritise and speed up this project? (5.1)
- The continued increase in churn of prisoners (13%) is having many impacts in this resettlement prison: How is the Minister proposing to alleviate the destabilising effects of population changes on the resettlement and training estate? (4.1)
- Prisoners are suffering delays and cancellations of parole hearings, leading them to spend unnecessary additional time in prison. What can be done to eliminate this and free up additional space in overcrowded prisons? (7.3)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Many prisons have enhanced gate security to prevent illicit items from entering. What plans are there to provide Coldingley with enhanced security arrangements to prevent the ingress of illicit items? (4.5)
- Many prisoners have the Building Choices programme on their sentence plans. There have been multiple missed target dates for starting this programme. When will it start? (7.3)
- There has been no improvement in the transfer of property between prisons in the reporting year. What is the Prison Service planning to do about this? (5.8)

TO THE GOVERNOR

- How is the widespread availability of drugs and other illicit substances around the site going to be curtailed and eliminated? (4.5)
- The trend in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults has increased by close to 25% in the past year. What actions are being taken to tackle this? (4.3)

3.3 Progress since the last report

Lord Timpson, the previous Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending responded to the 2024-25 report with the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in a letter dated 1 December 2025. The Governor responded with an update on progress by email.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister		
The churn of prisoners is having many impacts in this resettlement prison: How is the Minister proposing to alleviate the destabilising effects of population churn on the resettlement and training estate?	See letter from the Minister of State for Justice, dated 1 st December 2025 (also available on the IMB website)	The level of churn of prisoners has increased by an additional 13% in the past year and continues to have a destabilising effect on many aspects of prison life. As of 31 July, 2026, 47% of the prisoners in Coldingley have been there less than six months.
The collapse of ISG and re-letting of its contracts has halted the work installing in-cell sanitation since last September. What can be done to prioritise and speed this project up?	See letter from the Minister of State for Justice, as noted above	The installation of in-cell sanitation in A, C and D wings of Coldingley has still not recommenced as of the end of this reporting period.
Has the Minister any further plans to help Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentenced men still in prison?	See letter from the Minister of State for Justice, as noted above	The Board continues to be concerned about the plans for IPP prisoners. At the end of July 2026, there were 20 IPP prisoners at Coldingley compared to 26 as of July 2025. Furthermore, IPP prisoners have been moved to Coldingley to complete the Building Choices programme as part of their sentence plan with this programme

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
		suffering multiple delays in starting.
What can the minister do to help those staff whose visas and jobs are threatened by the recent changes to immigration regulations?	See letter from the Minister of State for Justice, as noted above	The Board welcomes the temporary exemption granted to prison officers but remain concerned about the temporary nature of this exemption and the possible effect on staff if this exemption is not extended or if a lower salary threshold is not implemented.
The Prison Service		
Coldingley has witnessed an extreme case of operational staff attrition, what is being done to improve and stabilise staff retention?	This question was not addressed in the response.	The Board acknowledges the improvements made in staff retention. At present, operational staff retention does not appear to be an issue.
Current property handling systems always generate the most complaints. The last policy framework has had little impact. When are fundamental and effective systemic changes going to be made?	This question was not addressed in the response.	Whilst there has been a 58% reduction in the number of IMB applications relating to property issues inside Coldingley, the number of applications related to property transfer remained consistently high. The problems associated with property transfer have not been resolved.
What can be done to get mentally unwell men out of unsuitable accommodation and into secure hospitals far more quickly?	See annex to letter from the Minister of State for Justice, published on 1 December 2026	Some prisoners with mental health issues have continued to be held in under CSU conditions even when the Coldingley mental health team have given the opinion that these men are mentally unfit to be held there.
What is being done to replace the Sycamore Tree restorative justice programme?	This question was not addressed in the response.	The Board's concerns remain regarding this issue.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
The Governor		
How is the widespread availability of drugs and other illicit substances around the site going to be curtailed and eliminated?	We opened a new ISFL unit and recommenced random MDT in the spring. This September we have delivered more searching and specialist operations to recover drugs, as well as introducing a dedicated drug strategy SO. Suspicion testing is increasing and we have various initiatives to promote healthy living.	Whilst the Board commends the efforts made by the Governor in the past year, there is little evidence that the widespread availability of drugs and other illicit substances have been curtailed.
How is progress in such actions going to be monitored and measured?	The positive rate for drug testing will be the primary measure, but intelligence reports, cell searches (and finds) and gym delivery will also be important indicators	The Board highlights the 36%% rate of positive random drugs tests in the year to end June 2026 and the high levels of prisoners under the influence of drugs.
What is happening to ensure that far more moments of potential conflict and all incidents of the Use of Force are recorded on camera?	Following the Security audit in June 2025, we have reintroduced radio reminders to staff to turn on their cameras. We will also encourage this through staff reward and recognition. Over the last year we have made significant progress in increasing CCTV footage, including new cameras on A wing and an overhaul of the E wing system.	The Board acknowledges the efforts made by prison management to increase the use of body worn cameras when incidents of Use of Force take place, with an average of 88% usage in the 12 months to the end of June 2026. There was a drop off in usage in April and May 2026, which appears to have been rectified.
During core hours too many men are still to be found around the site neither fully engaged in purposeful activity or in their accommodation. What steps are being taken to stop Coldingley's 'loitering culture'?	We have issued guidance for Residential staff, coordinated by the daily "Oscar 2", so that Officers on each wing are responsible for clearing particular sections of the prison. This is being driven	The Board acknowledges that some progress has been made in this regard with the number of prisoners unassigned being significantly reduced.

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
	by our Head of Performance Assurance.	

Evidence sections 4 – 7

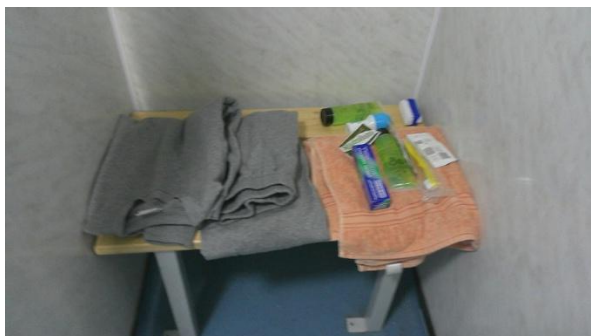
In this report, unless otherwise stated, annual data covers the 12-month period to the end of July 2026. This period is referred to throughout as 'this year', 'the year' or the 'reporting year'. The use of this 12-month period for data is consistent with previous annual reports from this Board. Call out boxes contain prisoner quotes.

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and Induction

4.1.1 Reception

The number of prisoners passing through reception in Coldingley has risen for a second year due to the increased churn within the prison population. From our observations staff appear to be handling the extra numbers well. The area is clean and freshly painted, and the disability access toilet and shower are now fully functioning. We have observed the availability of fresh towels and clothing, though few prisoners choose to use this facility. New arrivals are processed in good time to get to their wings in time for the evening meal. Feedback from prisoners about their reception experience is positive.



Newly refurbished shower in Reception. The Board have observed the prisoner reception orderly doing a thorough job of ensuring fresh towels and clothing are available

4.1.2 Induction

The Board is pleased to note that 94% of new arrivals received an induction, compared to 75% in the previous year. However, prisoners told us that the induction process is too long. Having transferred in from another prison they are not new to the system, they already know the basics and want to engage in purposeful activity as soon as they can. With the increased churn a backlog built up during the year to such an extent that the induction period was temporarily extended to four weeks.

In October our limited survey revealed 63% did not feel Induction was helpful.

During June 2026, the Board spoke to prisoners who had recently gone through the induction process. They felt the long period of doing nothing and the delay in getting work, lead to boredom which then leads to poor behaviour and drug taking.

No proper tour of the prison

Same old stuff

Want to get working

Cells for new arrivals on A wing are in a better state of readiness than last year. The prisoner wing orderlies are efficient and we have observed the induction cells to be cleaner than in the past. The safer custody department focused on supplying better information for new arrivals and a large sign giving details of regime times, visits, menu and canteen ordering. Prisoners told us this is helpful.

It is still a shock to many new arrivals that there is no toilet or wash basin in the cell, and that there is a centrally controlled queue system for prisoners to access sanitation and drinking water overnight, one at a time. The wait can be long, on occasion over three hours, which is excessive. Chamber pots are however provided.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) is the process used to identify, monitor and support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm or suicide. An average of eight ACCT documents were opened in Coldingley each month. Triggers for self-harm and available support should be discussed with each prisoner, and a plan agreed and reviewed to keep them safe. The Board regularly check ACCT documents and attend meetings with the prisoner where the plan is reviewed. From our conversations with some prisoners who have been on an ACCT, the support given has been appreciated.

Support plans are local to Coldingley and offer extra time to those who do not fit the criteria to be placed on an ACCT. Prisoners on support plans have told the Board that they were pleased to be offered one and benefited from the extra support when going through a difficult time. Around 11 support plans are opened each month.

Safety intervention and complex case meetings (SIM) held weekly, continue to be data driven and are well attended by relevant prison staff. We have observed good discussion from staff at all levels who appear to be familiar with the prisoners of concern

4.2.1 Listeners and Samaritans

Listeners are prisoners who are selected, trained and supported by Samaritans to offer 24/7 confidential listening support to other prisoners. With around 15 listeners on the team, they have an average of 22 callouts each month. Samaritans provide basic information to the prison on the main issues raised during these call outs as being; problems with staff, parole and recall, regime and mental health.



One of the two new Listener suites where they can talk in private

4.3 Violence and violence reduction/self-isolators

4.3.1 Violence

There has been a 25% increase in the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults during this year. A total of 91 prisoner on prisoner assaults were recorded during the previous year, an average of 7.6 each month. This has risen to 114, an average of 9.5 each month in the reporting year.

The HMIP report for Coldingley, published 23 February 2026, stated that the level of *“serious prisoner on prisoner assaults remains high, and weaknesses in supervising, searching and CCTV coverage all create opportunities for violence and the illicit economy to flourish”*

The Board has been concerned about the very poor levels of staff presence on the landings so were encouraged to observe a slight improvement during this year. In a snapshot survey over a week in March, staff were observed working on the landings on 32 of the 78 observations. The Governor continues to encourage more staff visibility, and the Board are hopeful this trend will continue.



One of the main thoroughfare areas was highlighted by prisoners as unsafe. In a positive move large mirrors were installed in order that the area could be better monitored. Within a month these had been vandalised and replaced with smaller ones which are harder to tamper with.

Prisoners have told the Board that reasons for violence are related to gang or debt issues and an increase in prisoners under the influence (UTI) of an illicit substance.

4.3.2 Self-isolators

If prisoners feel unsafe, they can choose to self-isolate and stay behind their door, limiting access to the regime. The number of self-isolators is generally low in Coldingley, with rarely more than two at any one time. The Board makes use of the in-cell phones to contact these prisoners. Feedback is positive about the way in which they are being supported by staff, with no major issues reported.

4.4 use of force

12% of all incidents involving use of force (UoF) were not recorded on body worn video cameras in the reporting year. At the weekly UoF scrutiny meetings, footage of recent incidents is viewed by senior management. The Board regularly attend these meetings and have observed learning points being noted and actions taken to address poor practice.

Pelargonic acid vanillylamide (PAVA) is a synthetic pepper spray intended for use as an incapacitant. It has been drawn and used once during this year. On this occasion members of the Board were in the vicinity and healthcare was observed monitoring those affected in the immediate aftermath.

Restorative justice (RJ - an approach to dealing with crime or conflict that focuses on repairing the harm caused, rather than simply punishing the individual), takes place monthly and is positively encouraged in Coldingley. A London based charity, Belong is contracted to provide this service through mentoring, with the focus on rehabilitation and reducing reoffending.

Debriefs are offered to all prisoners involved in assaults and UoF incidents. Around 50% accept the offer. Reasons for refusal are recorded and include '*can't be bothered*' and '*want to forget it*'. Prisoners who have engaged with Belong have told the Board they appreciated the opportunity to be heard. They are able to watch the camera footage and talk through what happened and what may have been done differently.

An action plan is available at the end of the debrief, with an offer to explore RJ or a referral to the substance misuse services (SMS) or the mental health team. Belong employs prison orderlies who undergo a two-day training in restorative approaches.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Poor searching of those entering the prison contributes to the ingress of illicit items. No members of the Board have been searched at any time during their 380 visits made this year. There is no enhanced gate security as there is in other establishments, only random and infrequent searching.

Limited CCTV coverage remains an issue and is being tackled, with more cameras now in place on the older wings. The Board has observed an improvement in the number of prisoners searched in the residential areas as they leave for work or other activities.

The security dept recorded a 70% increase in finds of illicitly brewed substances (IBA), from 1848 litres in the previous year to 2853 litres. The number of illicit drugs finds recorded has also risen from 219 to 415, an increase of 89%.

In our October survey 71% of prisoners told us that it is easy to get drugs in Coldingley. During the year the Board received an anonymous note regarding drugs being traded on E Wing, which was then flagged to the security department.

Debt goes hand in hand with easy availability of illicit substances and in our October survey 75% reported seeing people getting into debt. 53% reported seeing people being bullied.

Drugs are cheap as chips

Staff turn a blind eye

This is known as the party prison

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, food and clothing

5.1.1 Accommodation

The poor condition of residential accommodation has been flagged in our reports over several years and remains of concern to the Board. 35% of prisoners are still housed in cells without in-cell sanitation.

Complaints about accommodation from prisoners to the prison have risen by 50%.

Heating issues were a major problem over the winter due to a boiler breakdown which affected many cells. On the largest wing an estimated 70% of cells were impacted. The issue remained unresolved throughout the winter. GFSL have installed new radiator valves and removed sensors on one wing to mitigate the problem, however the issue is intrinsically a design problem.

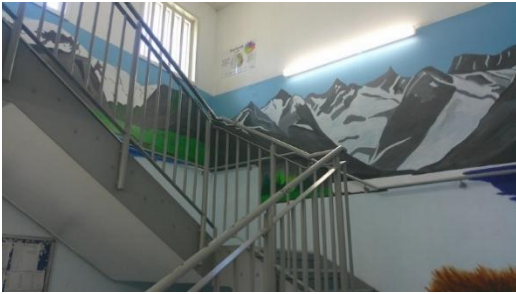
During one of the summer heatwaves, the Board did test the temperature of the accommodation during a particularly hot afternoon where temperatures outside registered 34C degrees. The older wings recorded temperatures between 33C and 34C on all the landings. Several prisoners told the Board that they cannot afford to buy their own fans and were sleeping on the floor as there is limited ventilation.

Legionella was discovered in the newly refurbished residential wing in March 2026, and remains unresolved. Alternative showering arrangements have been provided while the prison works to find a solution. Despite being reassured by staff that the water is safe to drink, prisoners do not want to drink it, spend extra money buying bottled water and have told the Board that they and their families are worried for their health.

Damaged flooring around the prison is evident, especially on the largest and newer wing. During our visits we frequently observe damaged floors which have been patched and re-patched with hazard tape. The photos below were taken in the servery area where prisoners serve hot food and in one of the designated safer cells.



The Board has observed a significant improvement in cleanliness around the prison, with evidence of better supervision by staff of wing cleaners. The central cleaning team are frequently seen deep cleaning the wings and the outside areas are better maintained. Freshly painted walls in several wings have improved the feel of the place and this is being done, when possible, by prisoners themselves.



Painting by a prisoner

The prisoner repair team, consisting of four prisoners, has had a busy and productive year keeping up with general repairs. Recycled materials were used for a variety of items such as those shown below.



5.1.2 Food

A malfunction of the computerised meal ordering system in April 2026 resulted in a 'first come first served' approach causing considerable frustration to kitchen staff and prisoners. Management implemented a temporary system while they waited for a software solution.



The new kitchen manager has improved the look of the servery areas, the walls of which were freshly painted. The colourful information notices on the walls were designed and printed in the prison signs workshop.

In the October survey, 76% of respondents rated food as three stars or less. The Board heard negative comments about portion size, described as '*inadequate for grown men*'. However, in recent months there has been a marked increase in positive comments about food. The Board frequently tasted the food and found it to be mostly tasty and appetising. Prisoners have been particularly appreciative of the freshly made cakes following the installation of a large Hobart mixer.

Some prisoners comment that servery workers show bias and favouritism when they serve food and that this is unchallenged by staff. We too have observed this.

Canteen – prisoners may use their own money to buy items, including food on the weekly canteen. They tell us there are not enough healthy options on the canteen list. The other complaint the Board hears from prisoners is about the rising cost of items on canteen, with no corresponding rise in their wages.

5.1.3 Clothing

Most prisoners choose to wear their own clothes and to purchase their own bedding. A kit (essential items that a prisoner receives from the prison for everyday living.)

change room is available but from our observations and comments from prisoners it is poorly maintained and poorly stocked.



The poorly maintained kit change room



5.2 Segregation (CSU)

Eleven prisoners can be housed in the care and separation unit (CSU) in Coldingley with one cell designed to be used as a constant watch cell.

The Board notes that this year no prisoner was held in CSU for over 84 days. Eight have been held there for over 42 days. The CSU staff and Governor attempt to reintegrate or move prisoners as soon as possible and during the 74 reviews the Board has attended this year we observed this taking place.

Some CSU staff have been praised by the prisoners, and the Board has found them helpful in facilitating our weekly visits to each resident and with any prisoner requests for a private conversation with IMB. Books, in cell distraction packs and radios are readily available.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key work

5.3.1 Staff and prisoner relationships

The Board has observed staff fostering good working relationships with prisoners. In our survey prisoners were asked 'do staff treat you with respect' - 49% answered 'mostly' and 'always'

Only four out of ten replied yes when asked if a staff member had asked how they were in the last week. When asked about staff accessibility and approachability prisoners answered favourably with comments such as 'staff try to help'.

Although the prison council has struggled to recruit members, monthly meetings have continued to take place. HMIPs report published 23 February 2026, stated that the prison council was an '*excellent initiative*' and the Board regularly observe these meetings, which are well attended by the senior management team.

The Governor is available in the library every Monday evening and prisoners have the opportunity to talk in private with him. We have received positive feedback about this.

*The Governor is open to change in the library every Monday
to give us time to talk to him
It's good to hear from the horse's mouth*

Wayout TV (in-cell television channel) is becoming increasingly popular. Last year the Board asked 75 prisoners if they watched the weekly Governor's blog, to which 61% replied yes. This year that had increased to 72%.

5.3.2 Key work

Each prisoner should be allocated a prison officer as their key worker. Key workers are expected to engage with prisoners, build relationships and support their rehabilitation. The prison data indicates that it now takes an average of 24 days for a newly arrived prisoner to have their first session with their keyworker. The number of sessions recorded has dropped by 37%.

	July 2024 - June 2025	July 2025 – June 2026
Key work sessions	6856	4297

The Board survey in November 2025 revealed 44% of prisoners were unaware of who their key worker was.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The equality and diversity team attempt to promote better understanding and celebration of diversity in Coldingley.

- Multi faith workshops have been held this year, offering craft sessions to various faith groups and these were well received by those who attended.
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller history was celebrated in June and the kitchen provided special food, to mark the occasion.
- Black History month was celebrated with a quiz, a themed menu, exhibitions, and talks from motivational speakers about how to turn their lives around. Feedback from those who attended was very positive.

Neurodiversity

Prisoners identified with neurodiverse needs receive a letter of introduction from the neurodiversity manager to make them aware of the support which is available to them in Coldingley. Prisoner orderlies deliver the letter to individuals and if necessary, help them read it. The Board have heard positive comments from those who engage with this support. A sensory room with subdued lighting provides a quiet, peaceful space where individuals can focus on crafts, games and reading and this year a sensory garden was designed and built by prisoners.

for a moment you can forget where you are



The neurodiversity garden

Age

In Coldingley under 25s make up 10% of the population and over 60s account for 5%. The Board conducted interviews with prisoners from both age groups about their experiences of life at Coldingley and their views on ways it might be improved.

Two-thirds of the under 25s interviewed said they were bored due to the lack of social opportunities and sporting activities. Most of the over 60s interviewed thought they were treated respectfully by staff and appreciated the over 60s gym sessions and other social groups which are available to them.

Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF): This year staff informed the Board that complaints were being made by prisoners that DIRFs were not being properly treated. They have since revised the process and all complaints submitted as DIRFs are responded to as such even when it is not initially considered to relate to any of the protected characteristics. There has been a 27% rise in the number submitted, from 88 to 112 during this reporting year.

Prisoners still tell the Board that they do not trust and will not use the DIRF system as complaints may be seen by those they are complaining about. The prison now supplies envelopes for confidentiality in the hope this may create more trust in the system.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team report that their staff levels have been at full strength since the appointment of a Rabbi in September. Prisoners have had access to a variety of events and festivals.

- Ramadan and Eid were observed by the Board to run smoothly and feedback from prisoners was very positive, particularly the celebration food.
- Christmas was celebrated with a carol concert, services and present wrapping sessions.
- Support for the bereaved was provided by the Living with loss course.
- For the second year running a wedding was facilitated.
- Ex military prisoners are invited to regular meetings where care after combat and SSAFA are usually present. A cycle event on Remembrance day raised funds for those organisations. A local MP attended one of their meetings.



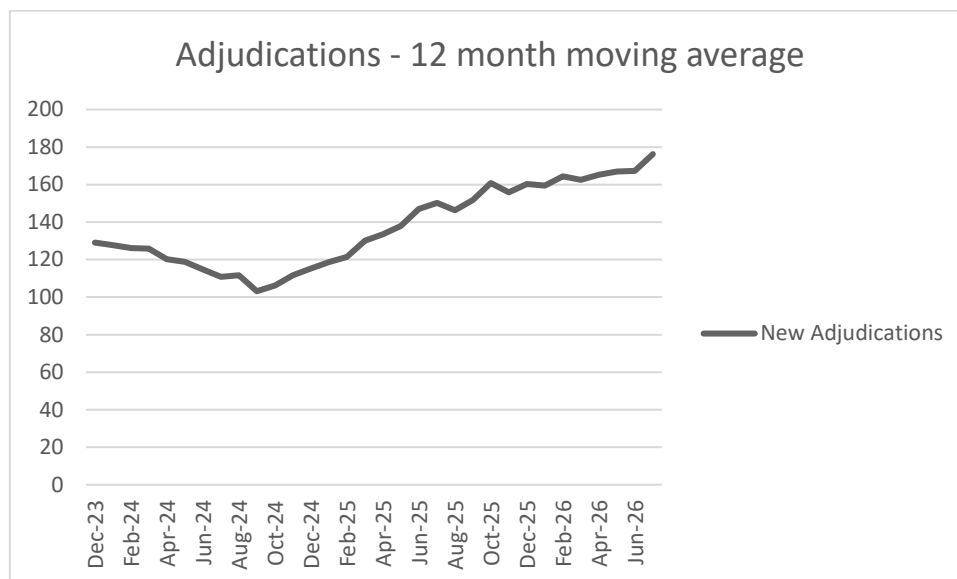
Memorial arch produced in the Coldingley signs workshop

5.6 Adjudications and Incentives schemes

5.6.1 Adjudications

There has been a steady rise in the number of both adjudications (disciplinary hearings held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) and cellular confinement (a formal disciplinary measure which includes loss of privileges).

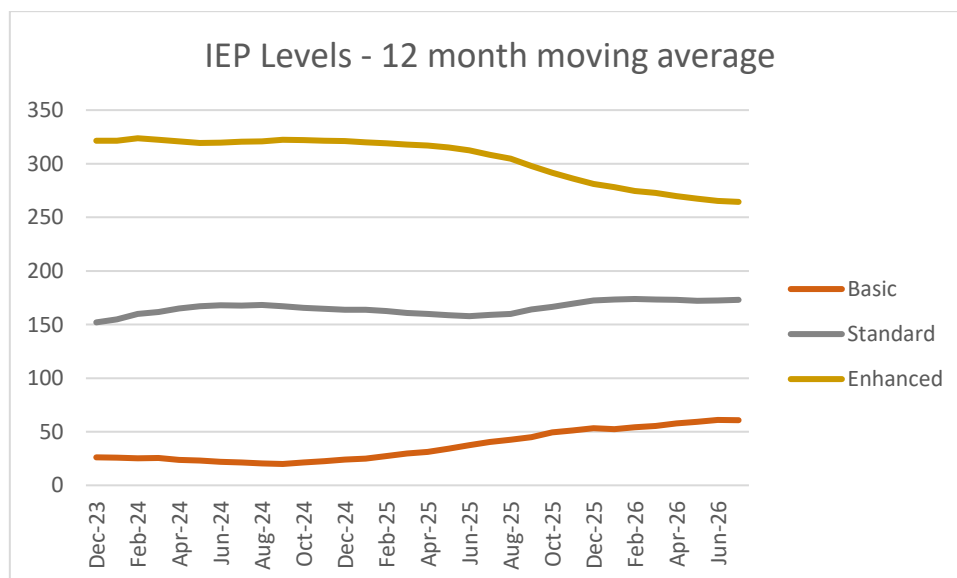
Prison data reveals that adjudications have risen from a monthly average of 150 in the previous reporting year to an average of 176 this year.



Cellular confinement has risen from a monthly average of 39 days last year to 47 days this year. The rise may in part be explained by stricter implementation of the rules applied on certain wings, along with more regular mandatory drug testing.

5.6.2 Incentives Policy Framework (IPF)

Data shows that the number of prisoners on the basic level (the lowest level of privileges) has been rising since February 2025, whilst the enhanced level has dropped by similar proportions during this time.



5.7 Complaints

Prisoners may raise a complaint with the prison and from our observations these are dealt with in a timely fashion. Some complaint replies are sent to the Governor to check quality and timeliness.

The Board are told by prisoners that they do not have faith in the system and will not use it as *“there is no point”* as *“nothing ever gets done”*.

During the reporting year the number of complaints recorded by the prison was 1504 compared to 1331 the previous year, a 13% increase. Prison data recorded the top five areas of complaint as:

- Property
- Confidential access
- Residential
- Complaints against staff
- Security

5.8 Property

Missing or damaged property, either during transfer or during cell moves within the prison continues to be a major issue. Prison data records property complaints as being the highest category of complaint, with 367 complaints this year compared to 347 last year.

Property lost or damaged during transfer is a major source of frustration for prisoners. Any delay, or loss of items such as family photographs or other items of personal sentimental value can cause unnecessary stress during a time of change.

Overall property issues raised with the IMB have decreased and the Board have observed an improvement in the organisation and handling of prisoners' property in the reception. Based on analysis of IMB apps relating to property, 32% involved issues within Coldingley such as transfers to the CSU, cell clearance and other cell searches.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Overall staffing levels within healthcare have improved. Appropriate healthcare professionals attended all ACCT and segregation reviews observed by the Board. The bi-monthly delivery Board meetings are well run and well attended. A well-being open day is run each year with drop-in sessions for prisoners.

Based on our monitoring, prisoners have a generally positive view of the healthcare provision in Coldingley and appreciated the generally quick response to applications for healthcare. Healthcare applications to the IMB were 11% of the total in the past year, which is slightly up from last year.

The number of appointments not attended by prisoners remains a concern. However, this is a continuous improvement target of the NHS Trust. The appointment of an orderly to distribute movement slips has helped reduce non-attendance.

Our monitoring revealed that although prisoners get a detailed booklet on accessing healthcare in Coldingley when they arrive in reception, they are not always familiar with how to get urgent appointments or triage for urgent issues.

The high level of prisoner churn continues to result in more prisoners arriving with complex medical needs, including some with significant mental health issues. However, the number of prisoners arriving at Coldingley whose prescribing needs cannot be met has significantly reduced due to new controls.

6.2 Physical healthcare

The following observations are made on waiting times for physical healthcare disciplines as reported by the NHS Trust at the end of June 2026.

- There is no waiting list for GP appointments as was the case in the previous reporting year.
- There is no waiting list for optician's appointments which is an improvement when compared to the small waiting list reported last year.
- The waiting list for physiotherapy is longer than in the previous reporting year due to staff shortages.
- The waiting list for podiatry is similar to the previous reporting year.

The IMB applications that the Board receives related to physical healthcare do not generally relate to waiting times for treatment.

6.3 Mental health

Our monitoring continues to reveal high levels of mental health issues among prisoners, that have led to some of them being held under unsuitable CSU conditions when a secure mental health provision may be more suitable. CSU staff and the mental health team have been observed to take a compassionate and empathetic approach to prisoners in mental health crisis and have demonstrably helped prisoners' transition back to the wings.

Mental health staff attended all CSU and ACCT reviews observed by IMB during the year. Mental health staff have been observed to speak up in circumstances where they had concerns over a prisoner's fitness to be held in CSU.

6.4 Social care

Surrey county council is the social care provider at Coldingley. They are responsible for producing social care plans for the prisoners. Most of the social care is delivered by the three peer support workers and there are currently three prisoners with active social care plans in the prison.

When prisoners with social care needs are to be released, Surrey CC social care liaises with the local area social care to which the prisoners are destined.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Greater staff availability has been maintained through the past year continuing the elimination of unplanned lockdowns and improvements in time out of cell. Further improvements have been made during the year including weekend afternoon exercise, extra lunchtime unlock on long term unit and additional unlock during extreme heat.

Coldingley has a well-equipped gym with prisoners on basic level entitled to one session per week, those on standard level to four sessions per week and those on enhanced level five sessions per week. Staffing is currently one below complement, but another recruit is in training.

There is generally a good uptake of the weekday gym sessions with prisoners on a reserve list in case of cancellations. Our monitoring shows there is some surplus capacity for weekend sessions.

The gym also runs badminton, basketball and football sessions.

The gym supervisor has been helping six prisoners to achieve Level 2 in Gym Instruction. If successful, the prisoners will be qualified to work in gyms or be self-employed instructors on release.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

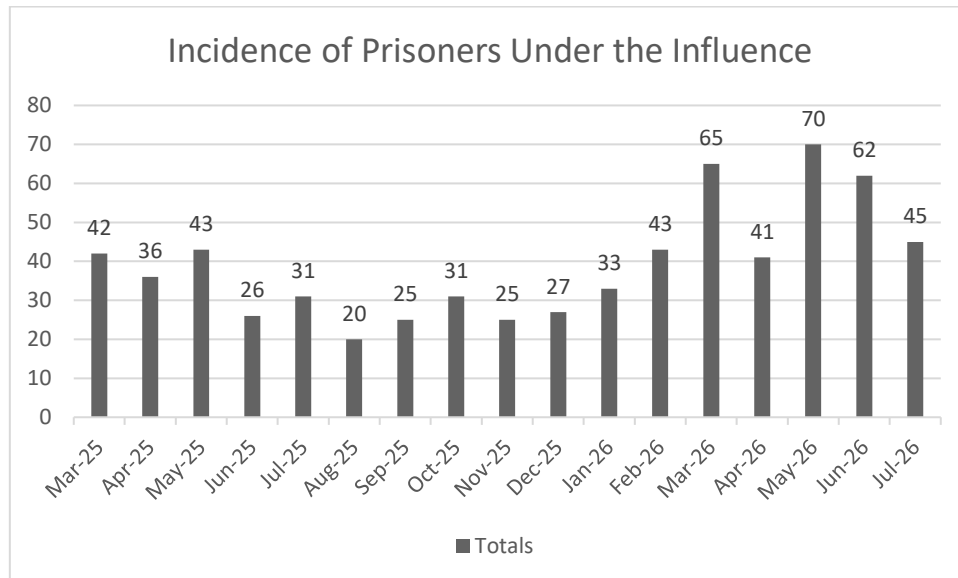
The number of prisoners engaging in substance misuse service (SMS) related group work has remained broadly consistent in the past year. There are currently 146 clients (~30% of prisoners) receiving drug and alcohol rehabilitation and support from SMS operated by Forward Trust. The staff shortages noted in last year's annual report have been addressed.

A monthly drug strategy meeting is held and is well attended by all relevant departments within the prison. The meeting moved to monthly following the HMIP inspection in November 2025.

The average number of prisoners receiving pharmacological intervention in the year to end June 2026 was 46, and the average number of prisoners on a maintenance plan was 37 in

the reporting year. The number of SMS clients leaving prison with referrals to local support services remains high, as does the number of clients leaving with Naloxone kits (a medication that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose).

There is an increasing trend of prisoners being found under the influence of drugs (UTI). See table below:



The prison is looking at ways to reduce the incidence of prisoners found UTI. All incidents of prisoners found UTI are referred to and encouraged to engage with SMS. Forward Trust (FT) run a variety of groups and workshops for clients. These include awareness sessions, harm minimisation, lived experience, relationship matters and living safer.

FT also invite anyone recently involved in incidents when found to be UTI to an ad hoc support session. This is a new initiative with a current take up of only 30-40%. The facilitators think there may be a perception from those they invite that they are in trouble and do not want to attend.

Prisoners who are found UTI on multiple occasions are put on a challenge, support intervention plan (CSIP). It is clear to the Board that the incidence of prisoners found UTI is unacceptable and is yet another indication of the availability of drugs in Coldingley. A small group of prisoner peers work with FT and talk with potential service users to encourage them to get support. They run a weekly self-help group on the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) wing, The peers stress an important part of their role is to build trust, so that prisoners feel comfortable to talk and more willing to accept help.

The number of positive mandatory drug tests (MDT) is concerning with 36% of tests giving a positive result in the year. This underlines the levels of drug taking and the ease of access of drugs within the prison. The level of positive MDTs is reported to be among the highest within the prison estate, although true like for like comparisons are difficult as Coldingley has a low test refusal rate when compared to other prisons.

Psychotic Substances, which mimic cannabinoids known as spice, and cannabis remain by far the most used illicit substances. The MDTs in the year led to the detection of a wide range of other drugs including cocaine, ketamine, amphetamine, buprenorphine (prescribed synthetic opioid), and gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA) painkillers.

The prison has re-established its ISFL zone on E wing and prisoner feedback was generally good. Our monitoring and discussions with prisoners in the zone indicated that better access to gym and cooking equipment are very much appreciated. Residents said it felt safer than other prisons but also that it has relatively few activities aimed at recovering addicts undertaking difficult journeys.

Feels like a unit

More respectful, like a completely different prison

Quieter, as good as it gets

They don't know how to deal with addicts

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

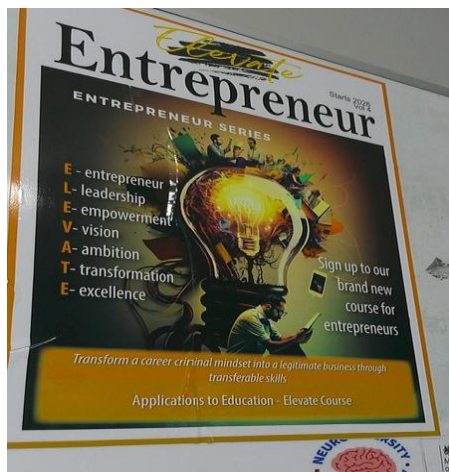
7.1.1 Education

Much of the past year has been dominated by the cuts in the education provision delivered by the education provider Milton Keynes College. Reductions in working hours led to instructor resignations and delays in hiring replacements exacerbated the issue. Awards in education in training (AET), health and safety, Construction Industry Certification Scheme (CSCS card), entry level English, art, and mental health first aid courses all stopped.

Although there has been a limited reintroduction of most of these, art and mental health first aid have not returned. The loss of the level 3 AET award course for much of the year removed a potential source of qualified prisoner trainers. However, prisoners were shielded from the worst impacts by imaginative and flexible management. Numerous prisoners have complained during Board surveys that the rehabilitative function of the prison seems to have been forgotten.

There have been some welcome recent developments:

- three day IT literacy courses and Friday business workshop drop-ins have been introduced to meet the challenges of the rapid population turnover.
- the replacement of largely paper based personal learning plans with fully digital learning and work progress plans has greatly improved the coverage and transferability of individual records of educational achievement from just over half to almost all eligible prisoners.



A prisoner-led course 'Elevate' started in April, targeted at identifying skills which may have been learned in a criminal environment that are potentially transferrable to positive future employment. It is well presented, popular and has already run several times

7.1.2 Library

The library continues to be well run and well used. Bookshelves are visible in various locations around the prison. A variety of initiatives throughout the year to promote literacy and a reading culture are actively supported by the Governor.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 Vocational training

The prison runs accredited training courses for barbering, forklift driving, dry-lining and roofing. An in-demand bricklaying course has only run only once. Demand far outstrips supply for these courses. The Board has observed:

- many prisoners do not finish courses because they are transferred or released before the courses finish.
- population churn
- for many new arrivals there is insufficient time to complete any skilled work courses where there are waiting lists
- longer term prisoners voice frustration that they cannot access these courses our recent survey of under 25s indicated that increased availability of training in skills that employers currently need and are looking for in today's job market would help reduce reoffending. Several of them told the Board they would benefit from basic life skills such as cooking

The education work and skills team have taken steps to react to this:

- the Coldingley IT academy (CITA) offers short (many one week) IT courses
- pre-programmed standalone and modular short courses are provided on Coracle (specially configured so they cannot be used like a normal internet-connected laptop) laptops
- DVLA driving theory online training
- prisoner repair and project team make use of prisoner trade skills

7.2.2 Work

Purposeful activity opportunities appear insufficient. Boredom through lack of work or education is now being more clearly recognised by prison management as a significant factor driving the prison's problematic levels of substance misuse.

The principal workshops remain:

1. Headphone workshop: largely unskilled work disentangling and re-packaging airline headphones: prisoners currently assigned: approximately 42
2. Print shop: producing mainly prison service materials, which mostly involves folding card and paper. There are limited opportunities for a few prisoners to learn specialised printing practices and machine operation skills: prisoners currently assigned: approximately 43
3. Sign shop: digital design and production of commercial quality signage mainly for the prison estate, with attractive examples all around the site: prisoners currently assigned: approximately 52
4. DHL: warehousing, picking and distribution of weekly canteen orders for up to four prisons, with opportunities to learn practical logistics and warehousing skills: prisoners currently assigned: approximately 33.

The work undertaken in headphone workshop and the majority in the print shop cannot be seen as purposeful activity, contributing to rehabilitation or the acquisition of in-demand skills in current employment markets. The default position of the Governor is that workshops must be filled, prisoners must start in entry level jobs, and the more trusted

specialist jobs should be earned through progressive workplace performance and good behaviour.

In May 2026, combined attendances of the MNH, print and signs workshops were 60% (morning) and 55% (afternoon) of their allocated workers.

Recently those who are unemployed because they refuse to work or attend education have become subject to harsher penalties and a policy of placing prisoners on IEP basic was introduced. However recent spot-checks found that a significant minority of unemployed prisoners had not been subject to this sanction, and that it was applied inconsistently across the wings.

Of the 63 unemployed at the end of May, half were due for release this year, with one third scheduled for release in the next three months. There is now clearly a short stay cohort present not incentivised by such measures.

In addition to the workshops, prisoners undertake cleaning roles on and off the wings as well as kitchen work.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The failure to deliver the new Building Choices (BC) offending behaviour programme is of concern. According to the prison data over half of the prisoners in Coldingley are potential candidates for this programme. The inability to provide BC this year hinders progression. Furthermore, poor communication about delays to the course aggravated the situation by unrealistically raising expectations especially about the course capacity. There was great frustration from those who had been transferred into the prison specifically for the course. It appears there is no prospect of BC being provided in 2026.

Pressure on the offender management unit (OMU) staff remains high due to the ever-changing sentencing rules implemented to reduce prison overcrowding. The prison receives many prisoners with 56-day fixed term recalls from reception prisons. Analysis of arrivals in April/May 2026 found the average time a fixed term recall prisoner had left was 38 days, well inside the 12-week pre-release window which OMU and the resettlement teams have in which to prepare them for release.

Our monitoring has revealed multiple examples where parole hearings have been postponed, some on the day of the planned hearing. Some prisoners have had multiple hearings postponed with one prisoner waiting an extra three months after the first scheduled date and suffering three additional postponements before eventually being granted open conditions. This is both frustrating and upsetting for the prisoner.

7.4 Family contact

The noticeable change in the home origins of the recent arrivals from reception prisons, means that a significant proportion of prisoners reside and may be released a considerable distance from their friends and family. But the prison, ably assisted by family services provider, the Prison Advice and Care Trust, (Pact), has been proactive in supporting family contact by arranging a variety of visit formats to recognise the range of prisoners resident. These include

- family days with entertainers and small animals available for children to pet
- men's social mornings for those who have not received a visit in three months

- additional family days for Listeners, those subject to life sentences and those with neurodiverse needs.

Visitors have often commented to the Board that Coldingley is one of the friendliest of prisons they have visited.

7.5 Resettlement planning

There were 381 prisoners released this year, a 17% increase on the previous year. Resettlement staff and orderlies in the employment hub help with providing or tracing bank accounts, national insurance numbers, birth certificates and driving licences. The department of work and pensions have a weekly presence to help with benefit claims. During 2025 a valuable on-site debt management support service operated by Citizens Advice was introduced. This had helped those with rent arrears, especially prisoners on shorter sentences to retain properties. Unfortunately, the local authority withdrew funding early in 2026.

The numbers leaving Coldingley with a confirmed job to go to in the past year have risen. Others are given contact details of employers with links to the resettlement team prepared to employ ex-prisoners as vacancies arise. At least 16 significant outside employers engage proactively laying on training and employment interviews for those nearing release.

The prison has maintained its good record of prisoners being housed on release, with 93% having accommodation arranged, compared to 92% in the previous year.

8. The work of the IMB

The Board has seven members, of whom two are in training.

1. Board statistics

1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of monitoring visits to the establishment	380
Total number of segregation reviews attended	74

2. Applications to the IMB

1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	23	13
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions	8	9
C	Equality	11	6
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	8	22
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	23	20
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	6	3
F	Food and kitchens	4	9
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	17	24
H1	Property within this establishment	26	11
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	22	23
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	5	11
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	32	28
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	19	23
K	Transfers	8	3
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	16	12
	Total number of applications	228	217

Annex A

Service providers

- Healthcare/mental health care: Central and North West London NHS Trust
- Substance misuse services Forward Trust, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous
- Social care Surrey County Council
- Learning and skills Milton Keynes College
- Library Surrey County Council
- Employment hub Jobcentre Plus
- Resettlement Probation Service, Making Connections
- Family services Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact)
- Restorative justice Belong
- Maintenance Government Facility Services Ltd. (GFSL)
- Refurbishment Bowmer & Kirkland – managing contractor
- Escort contractor Serco



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