



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Brixton

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

21–23 November 2022



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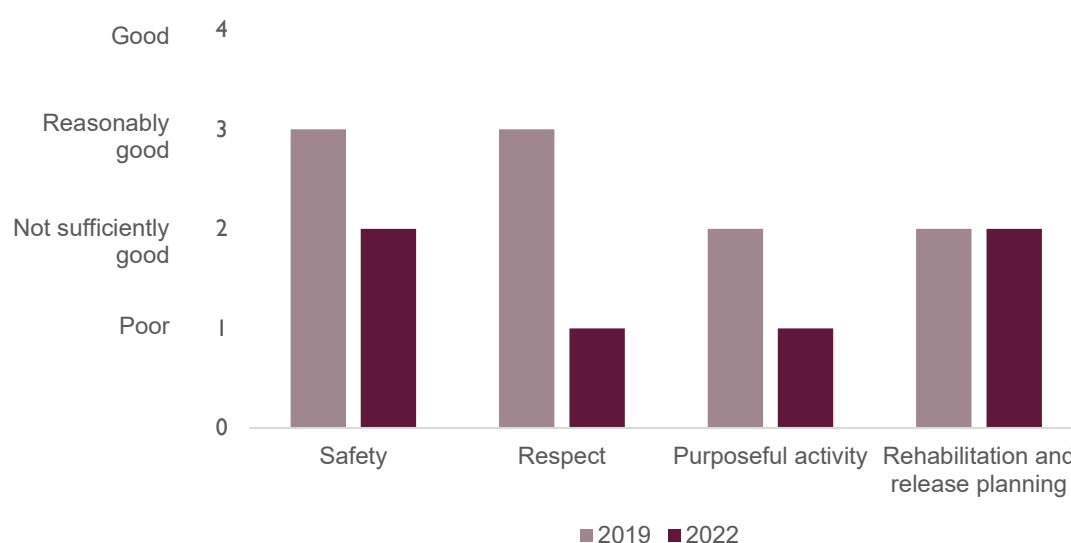
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Section 1 Chief Inspector's summary

- 1.1 HMP Brixton is a category C men's resettlement prison situated in inner city London and is one of the oldest prisons in the country. At the time of this visit, it was holding around 700 adult men, more than 200 of whom were convicted of sexual offences. The prison accommodated more prisoners than it could house in decent conditions. Most cells were overcrowded, holding two prisoners in accommodation designed for one.
- 1.2 At our previous inspections of HMP Brixton in 2019 and 2022 we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 1: HMP Brixton healthy prison outcomes in 2019 and 2022



- 1.3 Our last unannounced full inspection in March 2022 revealed a prison that was in trouble. Standards had fallen considerably in three of our four healthy prison tests and we gave our lowest judgment of 'poor' to both respect and purposeful activity. We had found prisoners breaking the rules without challenge from staff and inadequate care for some of the most vulnerable who, even when supported by the ACCT case management system, were not given the support they needed. Many prisoners shared tiny, cramped and dilapidated cells with inadequate furniture and graffiti on the walls. Release on temporary licence (ROTL) had been suspended, category D prisoners suffered interminable waits for transfer to an open prison and there were not nearly enough activities for the 724 prisoners. Standards of education were also poor and only a lucky few were allocated to some high-quality workshops. There was even less to do on G wing which held prisoners convicted of a sexual offence who, without suitable support, could pose a risk to the public when released. The system for applications had also broken down, leading to prisoners putting in complaints that were often dismissed. It had taken inspectors a long time to walk from one end of a wing to the other because they were stopped by so many prisoners eager to express their exasperation with life at the prison and their

inability to get the support they needed to complete their sentence and prepare for release.

- 1.4 The experienced and effective governor, who had temporarily taken up post a few months before our last inspection, had been in no doubt about the scale of the task. I was confident that many of our concerns would be addressed if she were given enough time and sufficient HMPPS support to get this category C London resettlement prison back on track. However, material support for refurbishment and a reduction in the headcount would be necessary and the future of the vulnerable prisoners' wing also had to be considered. In fact, I had concluded that the only way this prison could be successful with so little space was if a substantial proportion of prisoners were to go to work every day outside the wall.
- 1.5 During this review visit, our findings were mixed. There was evidence that the governor was giving the strength of leadership needed to drive improvements in important areas. There had been good or reasonable progress against eight of the 14 recommendations that we examined, although there remained insufficient progress against four and no meaningful progress for two. We found staff-prisoner relationships to be more professional and the environment on the wings had improved, but, with no reduction in the headcount by HMPPS, too many prisoners were still living in unacceptable conditions. The tiny, shared cells designed for one on A and B wings, that have a toilet situated at the centre, remain among the worst in the prison estate. There were still not enough activity places, with only a third of prisoners able to benefit from education and work leading to either a qualification or recognised skill training. Although the time prisoners spent unlocked had increased considerably, Ofsted found only reasonable progress in one theme and three remained insufficient. Education provision to meet the high need for English and mathematics levels required for most jobs was nowhere near enough, and the pass rate for the few prisoners who completed courses was far too low.
- 1.6 In contrast, partnership working with health care had been effective and we found good progress in relation to access and service delivery. Leaders had also taken effective action so that all prisoners' MAPPA management levels were confirmed with the community before release. The prison's scrutiny of use of force was also much improved, but progress in response to our other safety concerns had been disappointing. We identified continuing deficiencies in the care for new arrivals and no meaningful progress in improvements to the ACCT process for the support of prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide.
- 1.7 Too many prisoners were still without a sentence plan and support for prisoners to progress while at the establishment remained limited. There were no accredited programmes for prisoners convicted of an offence of a sexual nature, there was a backlog of re-categorisations to open conditions and ROTL was still not available. However, leaders had responded constructively to support prisoners approaching release with the development of an 'employment hub', and the partnerships and agencies available to assist prisoners were impressive.

- 1.8 The governor and her new management team are to be commended for their hard work and commitment to reversing the decline of a prison that is not without some considerable challenges. It was encouraging to find evidence of some good progress so soon after our last inspection. However, the lack of necessary action on the part of HMPPS was disappointing and had clearly constrained the prison's overall progress. So I repeat my conclusions following our last inspection that a reduction in headcount and an increase in purposeful activity are prerequisites for the prison to provide decent living conditions and realise its potential as an effective London resettlement jail. Decisions on the future of G wing and how to address the unmet needs of its vulnerable prisoner population are also well overdue. Ultimately, as I stated previously, the prison can only be more successful if a substantial proportion of its prisoners are released temporarily outside the prison wall each day to work in the community.

Charlie Taylor

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

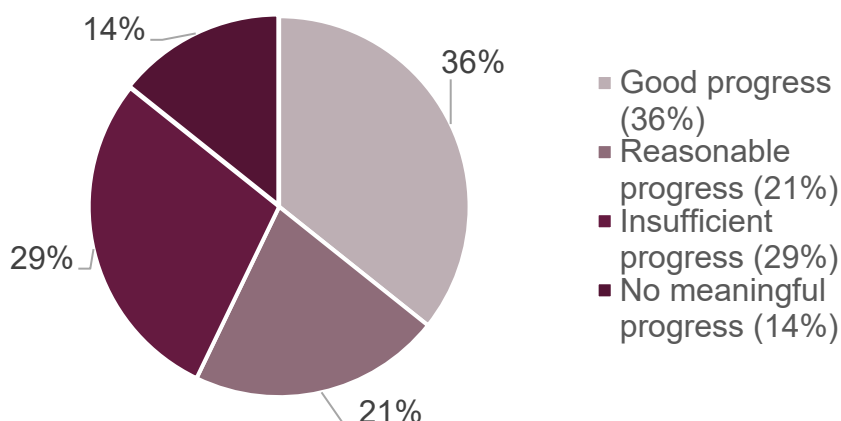
December 2022

Section 2 Key findings

- 2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up 14 recommendations from our most recent inspection in March 2022 and Ofsted followed up four themes based on their latest inspection or progress monitoring visit to the prison, whichever was most recent.
- 2.2 HMI Prisons judged that there was good progress in five recommendations, reasonable progress in three recommendations, insufficient progress in four recommendations and no meaningful progress in two recommendations.

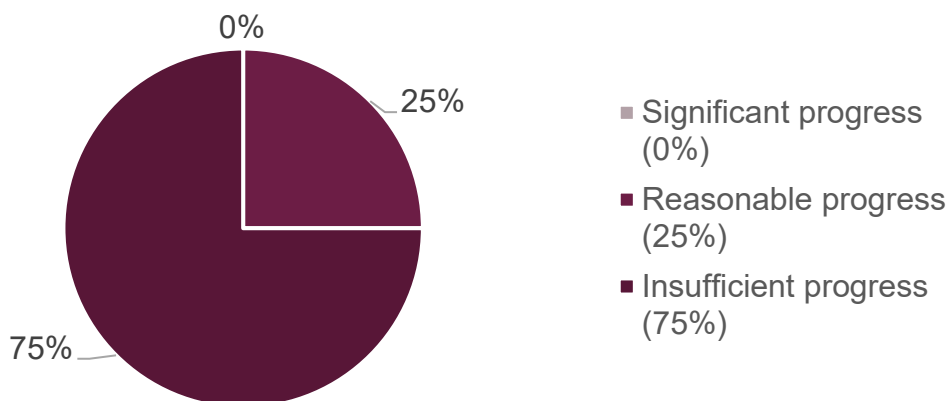
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons recommendations from March 2022 inspection (n=14)

This pie chart excludes any recommendations that were followed up as part of a theme within Ofsted's concurrent prison monitoring visit.



- 2.3 Ofsted judged that there was significant progress in one theme and insufficient progress in three themes.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from March 2022 inspection/progress monitoring visit (n=4).



Notable positive practice

- 2.4 We define notable positive practice as innovative work or practice that leads to particularly good outcomes from which other establishments may be able to learn. Inspectors look for evidence of good outcomes for prisoners; original, creative or particularly effective approaches to problem-solving or achieving the desired goal; and how other establishments could learn from or replicate the practice.
- 2.5 Inspectors found two examples of notable positive practice during this independent review of progress.
- 2.6 The introduction of 'speak up' sessions on the wings was a positive initiative that had engaged the wider patient group and provided an opportunity for them to take concerns directly to a health care manager. (See paragraph 3.39)
- 2.7 An 'employment hub' had been developed to provide prisoners with practical support, advice and guidance during the 12 weeks before their release. The hub had only been introduced recently, but an impressive number of partnerships and agencies were available to support prisoners. Employment fairs and recruitment days for different industries also took place. (See paragraph 3.57)

Section 3 Progress against the key concerns and recommendations and Ofsted themes

The following provides a brief description of our findings in relation to each recommendation followed up from the full inspection in 2022. The reference numbers at the end of each recommendation refer to the paragraph location in the full inspection report.

Early days in custody

Concern: Prisoners often spent too long in reception holding rooms, waiting to be processed. First night cells on B wing were ill-prepared for new arrivals. Many cells were dirty, missing furniture and contained graffiti. Induction into prison life had deteriorated since the last inspection.

Recommendation: Leaders should make sure that prisoners are safe and treated with respect during their reception, first night and induction. (1.36)

- 3.1 The reception area had improved and provided a reasonably welcoming environment for new arrivals. Prisoners told us that they had been treated decently on arrival with interviews and health screening taking place in private. However, too many prisoners waited for too long before being taken to first night accommodation.
- 3.2 Although first night cells on B wing were cleaner, better furnished and had been freshly painted since our last inspection, some were still not sufficiently well equipped. Some lacked kettles and working in-cell phones and some prisoners told us they had not been given a pillow. 'Room ready' prisoner orderlies had been appointed to prepare cells, but they had yet to receive guidance on what was required and there was a shortage of some equipment. Initial safety interviews were completed on arrival at the wing but there were no routine checks on new arrivals during their first night at the prison.
- 3.3 Induction had improved since our last inspection but there was no assurance process to measure understanding and some prisoners we spoke to remained unsure of basic information on how the regime operated. There was a tracking log in place, but it was not routinely completed.
- 3.4 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Use of force

Concern: Scrutiny of use of force was weak. We found evidence of poor use of techniques, inappropriate language from staff and concerning practice that was not identified during monthly meetings.

Key recommendation: There should be appropriate routine scrutiny of use of force incidents, with effective management oversight. (1.37)

- 3.5 Oversight and monitoring of the use of force were much improved. A multidisciplinary panel chaired by the deputy governor met each week. The panel reviewed all incidents from the previous seven days to determine any emerging issues and take swift remedial action and to identify and share good practice.
- 3.6 The monthly strategic meeting afforded a wider level of scrutiny. In addition to information from the weekly meetings, they interrogated a wide range of data to understand the reasons for force being used and to initiate actions to try to reduce it.
- 3.7 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Safeguarding

Concern: Support for prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide required improvement. Case reviews did not translate into meaningful care maps, which meant that prisoners' concerns and risks were not always fully addressed.

Key recommendation: Prisoners at risk of self-harm should have an effective plan that directs their care. (1.38)

- 3.8 The overall quality of ACCT documents (assessment, care in custody and teamwork case management of prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm) was poor, with many elements not fully completed.
- 3.9 Care plans were often too simplistic, failed to reflect issues raised in the initial assessment and, in some cases, were left blank.
- 3.10 Although reviews were pertinent and timely, issues raised at the reviews were still not mapped across to care plans to update and direct care. Plans for consistent allocation of case management had yet to take effect.
- 3.11 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress against this recommendation.

Staff-prisoner relationships

Concern: Staff–prisoner relationships were dysfunctional and lacked professional boundaries in some cases. Staff did not challenge low-level poor behaviour and failed to promote prosocial behaviour in prisoners. Prisoners told us that the only way to get any issues resolved was to become aggressive, and that staff were less responsive to the needs of those prisoners who behaved.

Key recommendation: Staff should model prosocial behaviour, set appropriate boundaries and ensure that good behaviour is rewarded.
(1.39)

- 3.12 Prison leaders had implemented a range of measures to improve support for a relatively inexperienced staff group, some of whom had not been well prepared for their roles. The governor had issued clear expectations for behaviour to both staff and prisoners, and managers had increased monitoring and support to develop the confidence and professional skills of staff.
- 3.13 Leaders were strengthening the effectiveness of middle management through new recruitment and training. They had improved the effectiveness of staff briefings through structured communication at morning meetings and had requested support from the national standards coaching team. The team had been operating in the prison for more than a month to provide officers with training and individual coaching. Our observations suggested that staff were increasingly applying appropriate standards when interacting with prisoners.
- 3.14 Prisoners' behaviour that we observed was generally acceptable and much better than at the last inspection. We saw some examples of vaping on the landings, but officers were challenging this. Both prisoners and officers told us that the wings were calmer and more well ordered. Prisoners said that most staff treated them reasonably well, although a minority said that some officers were unhelpful and did not treat them with respect.
- 3.15 It remained the case that many officers were relatively new in post and some said that they did not always have access to advice and support from experienced colleagues when they needed it. This left them lacking confidence about how to manage some of the situations they encountered on the wings.
- 3.16 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Daily life

Concern: Too many prisoners lived in cells which were poorly equipped, dirty and contained graffiti. Many cells were overcrowded and poorly ventilated. Access to basics, such as toilet rolls, cleaning materials, clean bedding, clothing and stored property, was too often very poor.

Key recommendation (a): Prisoners should not be held in overcrowded conditions. (1.40)

- 3.17 No progress had been made in reducing overcrowding since our last inspection. The prison was required to accommodate more men than it could house in decent conditions. As a result, most cells were overcrowded, holding two prisoners in accommodation designed for one.
- 3.18 The 'doubled-up' cells on A and B wing were not decent. They were particularly cramped, with no space for the basic furniture required by two prisoners. The toilet was in the centre of the cell, which further reduced the space available and the quality of daily life for prisoners.
- 3.19 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress against this recommendation.

Key recommendation (b): Prisoners should live in decent conditions. (1.40)

- 3.20 Managers had implemented a range of measures to improve the environment on the wings, within the constraints imposed by the old and overcrowded accommodation. Wing landings had been repainted and were brighter. A programme of refurbishment had greatly improved the shower rooms and wing laundries had been re-equipped with new washing machines and driers, which were all working.
- 3.21 Some cells were clean and well maintained, but older cells were difficult to keep clean, especially the single cells holding two prisoners. Although a cell painting programme was in progress, many cells remained poorly decorated, although we found little evidence of graffiti. A large quantity of new furniture had been secured and nearly all cells were properly furnished with storage cupboards.
- 3.22 Managers had introduced monitoring processes to improve standards of decency on the wings. Cleaning officers carried out a twice-daily audit of cleanliness on the wing and were now responsible for making sure that prisoner cleaners achieved reasonable standards. Managers carried out cell decency checks on the condition of all cells, reporting defects each week. Governors had recently started carrying out decency audits of whole wings, aiming to set and enforce clear standards for both prisoners and staff.



Landing on A wing

- 3.23 Most of the wings were reasonably clean, but some areas, such as stairways and railings, had ingrained dirt. Despite being recently refurbished, some shower rooms were not very clean.
- 3.24 Action had been taken to improve the supply of essential items such as bedding, clothes, toiletries and cleaning materials. Most prisoners said that these were now readily available.
- 3.25 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Prisoner consultation, applications and redress

Concern: The application and complaint systems were not working, with too many prisoners receiving answers late or not at all. When they did receive an answer, it often did not adequately address the issue that was being raised.

Key recommendation: Prisoners should receive a timely response to applications and complaints that fully addresses the issue raised.
(1.41)

- 3.26 Managers had introduced a new process for dealing with prisoners' applications. Prisoner information desk workers received all applications and recorded the date of receipt before delivering them to the relevant departments. They then monitored receipt of responses and details of those outstanding were reported at the daily briefing.

- 3.27 Overall, these measures had greatly reduced the number of outstanding applications, but some departments still performed poorly with most of their responses taking more than the target of five days. Many prisoners complained that their applications did not get a response, or responses were not received until weeks later when the issue no longer applied.
- 3.28 The quality of responses to applications that we saw was variable. Those requesting allocation to activities were well answered, but some other replies were too brief and some did not make it clear whether the application was accepted or not.
- 3.29 Managers had worked hard to deal with delays in answering complaints and the number returned late had almost halved since the last inspection. However, staff shortages during the previous three months had hampered progress and the number of complaints which were not answered in the scheduled time was still too high.
- 3.30 Managers had introduced a quality assurance process to monitor responses to complaints. A senior manager checked a sample of responses and gave feedback to staff where appropriate. Staff had recently been given guidance on procedural justice and a model answer template to help improve the quality of their responses.
- 3.31 The responses to complaints that we saw were polite but did not all fully address the issues raised by the complainant. Some did not explain why a complaint had been rejected, which was not helpful.
- 3.32 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Strategy, clinical governance and partnerships

Concern: Regime restrictions and inefficient officer escort arrangements contributed to long waits to see the dentist, optician and podiatrist. Some external hospital appointments were cancelled by officers without consultation with health care staff. The management of medicine queues by officers was inconsistent and increased the risk of diversion. We also found some weaknesses with the health care application process, which meant that some appointments had not been booked, contributing to the delays.

Key recommendation: Prisoners should receive health interventions in a timely and effective manner, assisted by adequate officer support, clear communication and a functional health care appointment system. (1.42)

- 3.33 Partnership working between the prison and health care had been effective. The introduction of free flow had improved access to health care, although long waits for the dentist and podiatrist remained. Additional sessions had been agreed with the dentist, but the provision of further podiatry sessions was unresolved.

- 3.34 Hospital appointments were well managed and the unauthorised cancellation of external appointments had ceased.
- 3.35 Health care had put robust measures in place to make sure that appointments were timely. Responses to requests for an appointment were prompt, triaged by a nurse and referred to the appropriate clinician, which had reduced delays. The health care wing representatives delivered acknowledgement slips and movement forms to patients which encouraged attendance to appointments.
- 3.36 The management of medicines queues by officers had improved on most wings and was closely monitored. However, officer supervision on one wing remained inconsistent and opportunities for diversion remained.
- 3.37 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Concern. Responses to health care complaints were inadequate.

Recommendation: All complainants should receive a timely response that addresses their concerns and demonstrates an understanding of the issues raised. It should also include details of what they should do if they are dissatisfied with the reply. (4.62)

- 3.38 The management and quality of health care complaints had improved. In the sample that we reviewed, nearly all responses addressed the concerns raised by patients. Those responses that were late contained a clear apology and all letters had guidance on how to escalate the complaint if needed.
- 3.39 Health care managers had introduced monthly 'speak up' sessions on the wings so that patients could raise health care issues with them. Uptake had been good and appointments had been used to address a range of concerns.
- 3.40 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Mental health care

Concern. Patients were not always seen within agreed timescales following a mental health referral.

Recommendation: Referral data should be captured accurately, including the correct referral date. The service should make sure that patients are seen within agreed timescales. (4.88)

- 3.41 A health and well-being coordinator was the single point of access for all mental health referrals. Referrals were discussed each weekday and were screened at the weekend by the duty mental health worker.

- 3.42 Data were accurately recorded and subject to scrutiny at monthly management meetings. Patients were now being seen within the agreed timescales.
- 3.43 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

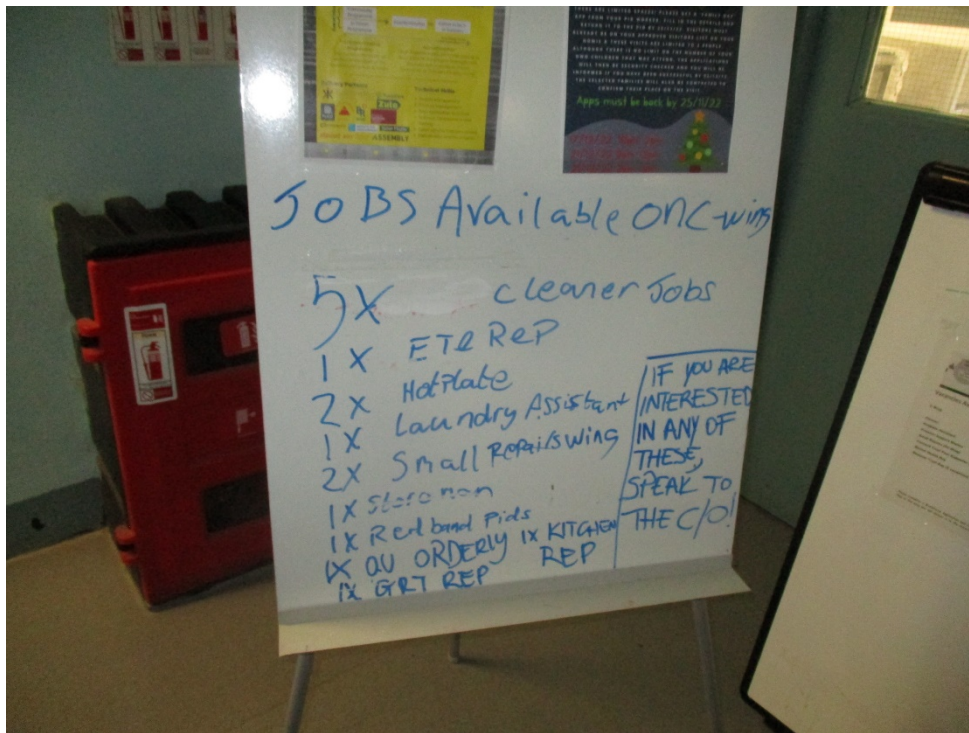
Education, skills and work



This part of the report is written by Ofsted inspectors. Ofsted's thematic approach reflects the monitoring visit methodology used for further education and skills providers. The themes set out the main areas for improvement in the prison's previous inspection report or progress monitoring visit letter.

Theme 1: What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that a large proportion of prisoners have access to, and can punctually attend, education, skills and work activities?

- 3.44 Leaders and managers had not provided enough education, skills and work opportunities to meet the needs of the prison population. Only a third of prisoners benefited from education and work which led to either a qualification or recognised skill training. The majority of prisoners worked in areas which provided few opportunities for them to develop the skills they needed for employment or training on release.
- 3.45 Too many activity places were not used. Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had greatly increased the proportion of activity places which were filled, but one in six places was still vacant. As a consequence, more than one in 10 prisoners was unemployed and took no part in education, skills or work activities.



A sign advertising jobs available

- 3.46 Attendance at education and industries was too low. Almost a fifth of prisoners did not attend their lessons or industrial work. Leaders and managers had improved arrangements so that those prisoners who did attend were punctual.
- 3.47 Leaders had not established opportunities for prisoners to undertake work or learning opportunities via release on temporary licence (ROTL, see Glossary). Prisoners did not benefit from the work experience or learning available in the wider community.
- 3.48 Leaders and managers had introduced some activities to widen participation in education, skills and work which benefited a small proportion of prisoners. These included accredited bakery training in the public restaurant, courses in railway track maintenance and learning horticulture skills.
- 3.49 Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had introduced a pay policy with the aim of giving prisoners an incentive to participate in education and training. Pay for attending education or training was significantly higher than that for prisoners undertaking wing work.
- 3.50 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 2: What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure more effective use of data to scrutinise the curriculum that they offer, and to make alterations to it accordingly?

- 3.51 Leaders and managers used data effectively to determine what employers and prisoners needed. They had analysed the labour needs of the local economy and of the types of employment prisoners wanted on release. They knew the extent of prisoners' existing English and mathematics skills. Managers had compared these data with their curriculum offer and understood that significant changes needed to be made.
- 3.52 However, leaders and managers had not made the necessary alterations to the curriculum to meet the identified needs of prisoners. They had not provided sufficient places for prisoners to study mathematics and English nor put in place provision which developed prisoners' wider employability skills. The curriculum failed to meet the needs of prisoners.
- 3.53 On arrival at the prison, more than half the prisoners were identified as having English and mathematics skills below the level required for most jobs. Leaders and managers had provided places in education for only around a tenth of these prisoners. As a result, many prisoners were released without the necessary skills needed for employment.
- 3.54 Leaders and managers had not put in place arrangements to develop prisoners' wider employability skills within work areas. The progress many prisoners made was not documented. For example, a wing health care representative had developed tolerance and understanding when listening to others, yet these new skills were not recorded or celebrated. As a consequence, the importance of these skills for employment was not well understood by prisoners.
- 3.55 Over half the prisoners were employed on the wings. Generally, this work was not sufficiently demanding to replicate real employment. Prisoners completed the required work quickly and spent the rest of their working time in their cells or socialising with each other. As a result, prisoners were not adequately prepared for the rigours of employment.
- 3.56 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 3: What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that the prison's staff work productively to meet individual prisoners' resettlement needs, and that careers advice and guidance is effective?

- 3.57 Leaders and managers had recently initiated a vibrant, well-planned, multi-agency employment hub which was successful in meeting individual prisoners' resettlement needs. Prisoners received good information, advice and guidance (IAG) on options for employment, training and further education following release. For example, prisoners received assistance with writing CVs, completing application forms and drafting disclosure letters.
- 3.58 Managers had developed effective partnership working to meet prisoners' resettlement needs. The IAG team worked collaboratively with many other agencies and providers who supported prisoners on resettlement, for example staff from Jobcentre Plus, housing charities, the probation service and a number of local charities who helped prisoners on release. As a result, prisoners received more comprehensive IAG which benefited them as they prepared to leave the prison.
- 3.59 Leaders and managers had developed a central database which contained good quality information from the agencies in the prison. Staff could quickly view information on each learner, including assessment results, previous employment and prisoners' aspirations, alongside key dates such as those for release or home detention curfew. Consequently, the different agencies in the hub worked together effectively to meet prisoners' resettlement needs. Though comprehensive in most respects, the database did not capture sufficient information from health care or aspects of sentence planning.
- 3.60 Engagement with employers had improved since the last inspection. They provided good quality information on trends in employment, terms and conditions and local vacancies. IAG staff used this information well and used links with employers to enable prisoners to achieve interviews which often led to employment.
- 3.61 Leaders and managers had organised helpful employer events which informed prisoners of job opportunities on release. However, not all vulnerable prisoners were able to access these events which limited the IAG they received.
- 3.62 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 4: What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that the quality of English and mathematics provision improves, so that prisoners develop their knowledge more rapidly and achieve qualifications in these subjects?

- 3.63 Too few prisoners achieved qualifications in English and mathematics. Overall, not enough prisoners studied English and mathematics given the needs of the prison population as identified through initial assessments. Not enough teachers of English were employed to meet the needs of the population.
- 3.64 Pass rates for the few prisoners who completed courses were too low. As a result, only a very small minority of those prisoners assessed as requiring English and mathematics qualifications to maximise their chances of employment did so.
- 3.65 Teachers were not sufficiently skilled at planning the subjects they taught. For example, a minority of teaching staff did not plan learning to meet the specific needs of learners with difficulties and disabilities. Many prisoners had completed basic assessments that showed they had additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, but not all teachers used this knowledge to plan individual learning to meet these needs. In other lessons prisoners made only slow progress.
- 3.66 Leaders and managers had not planned the English and mathematics curriculum to enable prisoners to make good progress. Prisoners could only study either English or mathematics at any one time. As many prisoners stayed at the prison for only a short time, they could not achieve qualifications in both subjects. Vulnerable prisoners could not study English beyond entry level and so did not achieve the qualifications of which they were capable.
- 3.67 Education outreach in the health and well-being unit was planned well to meet the individual needs of prisoners. Teachers used stimulating video films and a thoughtfully prepared learning pack. As a result, prisoners made good progress.
- 3.68 Teachers in vocational subjects planned learning effectively to develop prisoners' English and mathematics skills. For example, prisoners in painting and decorating learned about area and perimeter using this to plan work on paint coverage and coving.
- 3.69 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Reducing risk, rehabilitation and progression

Concern: There was limited support for prisoners to progress while at the establishment. Many did not have regular contact with their prison offender manager and key work was not supportive of progression. The lack of accredited interventions was a particular issue, given the population of prisoners convicted of sexual offences.

Key recommendation: Prisoners should receive the support they need to be able to make progress while at the establishment. (1.47)

- 3.70 Contact by prison offender managers (POMs) had increased since our last inspection. Prisoners now met their allocated POM during induction and we saw good examples of contact and support for most prisoners during their 12 weeks before release.
- 3.71 However, POM contacts outside these periods were inconsistent. Some records showed good contact, but others were poor, and several prisoners still reported shortcomings.
- 3.72 Key work (see Glossary) had recently been relaunched and its focus had changed since the previous inspection. The entries that we saw were now more focused on resettlement needs. However, these improvements were mostly limited to prisoners convicted of a sexual offence or on the London Pathways Unit, which offered support for those with complex personality difficulties. Prisoners located on other wings had little recorded key work contact. Leaders had credible plans to extend key work in the future.
- 3.73 There were still no accredited programmes for prisoners convicted of an offence of a sexual nature and, consequently, some potentially high-risk prisoners could still be released into the community without fully addressing their offending behaviour.
- 3.74 Home detention curfew (HDC) approvals had increased and were now timelier, but there was a backlog of re-categorisations to open conditions which hampered some prisoners' ability to progress. Release on temporary licence (ROTL) was not available which was a missed opportunity for prisoners to source suitable employment or training before release.
- 3.75 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Concern: Too few prisoners had, or knew about, a sentence plan.

Key recommendation: Concerted action should be taken to make sure that all prisoners who need one have a complete and up-to-date offender assessment system (OASys) document. (1.48)

- 3.76 At the time of our visit, there were 136 outstanding OASys, the vast majority of which (106) were initial assessments, which were the responsibility of prison staff. This was broadly similar to the number outstanding at our last inspection.
- 3.77 The higher turnover of prisoners at Brixton since our last inspection had increased the number of initial OASys that POMs needed to complete, which added to their workload.
- 3.78 Leaders had tried several innovative ways of reducing the OASys backlog, but external factors such as originating prisons and community offender managers (COMs) not completing the OASys had hampered their efforts.
- 3.79 The offender management unit had worked hard to manage the demand for OASys assessments without increasing the backlog, but too many prisoners at Brixton still had no sentence plan.
- 3.80 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this recommendation.

Public protection

Concern: The prison's public protection database showed that over 40 prisoners had not had a MAPPA management level confirmed before their release. The reasons for this needed to be understood and addressed by managers.

Key recommendation: MAPPA levels should be confirmed and recorded in good time for release. (1.49)

- 3.81 Leaders had identified several reasons for the high number of prisoners without confirmation of MAPPA management level before release. There were staffing difficulties in most of the nearby probation offices, which had reduced the service they provided.
- 3.82 Leaders had implemented a robust system to identify which prisoners needed a MAPPA level three months before release and requested this information from the COM. If the information was not forthcoming, leaders had effectively escalated the matter until it was resolved. COMs were now more timely in their initial response and the need to escalate the MAPPA level request to a senior manager had become less frequent.

- 3.83 There had been a considerable reduction in the number of unidentified MAPPA levels at the point of release. At the time of our visit, no prisoners were due for release over the next 28 days for whom a MAPPA level had not been identified.
- 3.84 We considered that the prison had made good progress against this recommendation.

Release planning

Concern: Accommodation and employment support and outcomes for released prisoners needed attention. Prisoners felt unsupported in these areas and HMPPS data showed that too many were released without accommodation identified and too few had education, training or employment to go to. There was no systematic follow-up of these outcomes to inform future provision.

Key recommendation: Prisoners should have accommodation and education, training or employment on release. (1.50)

- 3.85 Leaders had responded constructively to the need to improve support for prisoners approaching release. They had developed an 'employment hub' which was designed to provide prisoners with practical support, advice and guidance during their last 12 weeks at the prison. The hub had only been introduced recently, but the number of partnerships and agencies available to support prisoners was impressive.
- 3.86 The duty POM attended several weekly sessions in the hub and helped prisoners with their resettlement needs, completing housing referrals and signposting prisoners to community support where necessary.
- 3.87 The Department for Work and Pensions provided information about employment opportunities and helped prisoners to contact job centres and access benefits advice in the release area. Employment fairs and recruitment days for different industries also took place, although disappointingly these events were not always made available for prisoners on the vulnerable prisoner unit.
- 3.88 Hub staff helped prisoners to produce a CV and write letters of disclosure. A dedicated member of staff helped with approved forms of identification, such as birth certificates or citizen cards, and in opening bank accounts.
- 3.89 Despite a lack of support from COMs, more prisoners were now being released into settled accommodation, but there was still a reliance on the emergency housing service. Very few prisoners were now discharged without accommodation, but too much accommodation was only temporary.
- 3.90 Leaders had attempted to collate release outcomes with assistance from COMs but staff shortfalls outside the prison had hampered these

efforts. There was still no effective systematic follow-up of outcomes to inform future provision.

- 3.91 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this recommendation.

Section 4 Summary of judgements

A list of the HMI Prisons recommendations and Ofsted themes followed up at this visit and the judgements made.

HMI Prisons recommendations

Leaders should make sure that prisoners are safe and treated with respect during their reception, first night and induction.

Insufficient progress

There should be appropriate routine scrutiny of use of force incidents, with effective management oversight.

Good progress

Prisoners at risk of self-harm should have an effective plan that directs their care.

No meaningful progress

Staff should model prosocial behaviour, set appropriate boundaries and ensure that good behaviour is rewarded.

Reasonable progress

Prisoners should not be held in overcrowded conditions.

No meaningful progress

Prisoners should live in decent conditions.

Reasonable progress

Prisoners should receive a timely response to applications and complaints that fully addresses the issue raised.

Insufficient progress

Prisoners should receive health interventions in a timely and effective manner, assisted by adequate officer support, clear communication and a functional health care appointment system.

Good progress

All complainants should receive a timely response that addresses their concerns and demonstrates an understanding of the issues raised. It should also include details of what they should do if they are dissatisfied with the reply.

Good progress

Referral data should be captured accurately, including the correct referral date. The service should make sure that patients are seen within agreed timescales.

Good progress

Prisoners should receive the support they need to be able to make progress while at the establishment.

Insufficient progress

Concerted action should be taken to make sure that all prisoners who need one have a complete and up-to-date offender assessment system (OASys) document.

Insufficient progress

MAPPA levels should be confirmed and recorded in good time for release.

Good progress

Prisoners should have accommodation and education, training or employment on release.

Reasonable progress

Ofsted themes

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that a large proportion of prisoners have access to, and can punctually attend, education, skills and work activities?

Insufficient progress

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure more effective use of data to scrutinise the curriculum that they offer, and to make alterations to it accordingly?

Insufficient progress

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that the prison's staff work productively to meet individual prisoners' resettlement needs, and that careers advice and guidance is effective?

Reasonable progress

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that the quality of English and mathematics provision improves, so that prisoners develop their knowledge more rapidly and achieve qualifications in these subjects?

Insufficient progress

Appendix I About this report

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) is an independent, statutory organisation which reports on the treatment and conditions of those detained in prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, immigration detention facilities, police and court custody and military detention.

All visits carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

Independent reviews of progress (IRPs) are designed to improve accountability to ministers about the progress prisons make towards achieving HM Inspectorate of Prisons' recommendations in between inspections. IRPs take place at the discretion of the Chief Inspector when a full inspection suggests the prison would benefit from additional scrutiny and focus on a limited number of the recommendations made at the inspection. IRPs do not therefore result in assessments against our healthy prison tests. HM Inspectorate of Prisons' healthy prison tests are safety, respect, purposeful activity and rehabilitation and release planning. For more information see our website: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/our-expectations/>

The aims of IRPs are to:

- assess progress against selected key recommendations
- support improvement
- identify any emerging difficulties or lack of progress at an early stage
- assess the sufficiency of the leadership and management response to our main concerns at the full inspection.

This report contains a summary from the Chief Inspector and a brief record of our findings in relation to each recommendation we have followed up. The reader may find it helpful to refer to the report of the full inspection, carried out in [MONTH, YEAR] for further detail on the original findings (available on our website at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/>).

IRP methodology

IRPs are announced at least three months in advance and take place eight to 12 months after a full inspection. When we announce an IRP, we identify which recommendations we intend to follow up (usually no more than 15). Depending on the recommendations to be followed up, IRP visits may be conducted jointly with Ofsted (England), Estyn (Wales), the Care Quality Commission and the General Pharmaceutical Council. This joint work ensures expert knowledge is deployed and avoids multiple inspection visits.

During our three-day visit, we collect a range of evidence about the progress in implementing each selected recommendation. Sources of evidence include observation, discussions with prisoners, staff and relevant third parties, documentation and data.

Each recommendation followed up by HMI Prisons during an IRP is given one of four progress judgements:

No meaningful progress

Managers had not yet formulated, resourced or begun to implement a realistic improvement plan for this recommendation.

Insufficient progress

Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation but the actions taken since our inspection had not yet resulted in sufficient evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes).

Reasonable progress

Managers were implementing a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation and there was evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes) and/or early evidence of some improving outcomes for prisoners.

Good progress

Managers had implemented a realistic improvement strategy for this recommendation and had delivered a clear improvement in outcomes for prisoners.

When Ofsted attends an IRP its methodology replicates the monitoring visits conducted in further education and skills provision. Each theme followed up by Ofsted is given one of three progress judgements.

Insufficient progress

Progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.

Reasonable progress

Action taken by the provider is already having a beneficial impact on learners and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures.

Significant progress

Progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.

Ofsted's approach to undertaking monitoring visits and the inspection methodology involved are set out in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>.

Inspection team

This independent review of progress was carried out by:

Charlie Taylor	Chief Inspector
Sara Pennington	Team leader
David Foot	Inspector
Steve Oliver-Watts	Inspector
Paul Rowlands	Inspector
Sarah Goodwin	Health and social care inspector
Allan Shaw	Ofsted inspector
David Baber	Ofsted inspector

Appendix II Glossary

We try to make our reports as clear as possible, and this short glossary should help to explain some of the specialist terms you may find. If you need an explanation of any other terms, please see the longer glossary, available on our website at: <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/about-our-inspections/>

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. It monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. For information on CQC's standards of care and the action it takes to improve services, please visit: <http://www.cqc.org.uk>

Certified normal accommodation (CNA) and operational capacity

Baseline CNA is the sum total of all certified accommodation in an establishment except cells in segregation units, health care cells or rooms that are not routinely used to accommodate long stay patients. In-use CNA is baseline CNA less those places not available for immediate use, such as damaged cells, cells affected by building works, and cells taken out of use due to staff shortages. Operational capacity is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime.

Key worker scheme

The key worker scheme operates across the closed male estate and is one element of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model. All prison officers have a caseload of around six prisoners. The aim is to enable staff to develop constructive, motivational relationships with prisoners, which can support and encourage them to work towards positive rehabilitative goals.

Leader

In this report the term 'leader' refers to anyone with leadership or management responsibility in the prison system. We will direct our narrative at the level of leadership which has the most capacity to influence a particular outcome.

Protected characteristics

The grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Protection of adults at risk

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse and neglect (Care Act 2014).

Social care package

A level of personal care to address needs identified following a social needs assessment undertaken by the local authority (i.e. assistance with washing, bathing, toileting, activities of daily living etc, but not medical care).

Special purpose licence ROTL

Special purpose licence allows prisoners to respond to exceptional, personal circumstances, for example, for medical treatment and other criminal justice needs. Release is usually for a few hours.

Time out of cell

Time out of cell, in addition to formal 'purposeful activity', includes any time prisoners are out of their cells to associate or use communal facilities to take showers or make telephone calls.

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