



Debriefing paper for the inspection of

HMP Manchester

by HM Inspectorate of Prisons

17th September – 3rd October 2024

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This paper represents the material presented at the full inspection debrief by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. The material and assessments are indicative only and may be changed at the discretion of the Chief Inspector after due reflection during the report production process or on the discovery of additional evidence. Inspected bodies will be offered the opportunity to correct factual inaccuracies as part of the publication process.

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Healthy prison assessments

Outcomes for prisoners are good against this healthy prison test.

There is no evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in any significant areas.

Outcomes for prisoners are reasonably good against this healthy prison test.

There is evidence of adverse outcomes for prisoners in only a small number of areas. For the majority there are no significant concerns. Procedures to safeguard outcomes are in place.

Outcomes for prisoners are not sufficiently good against this healthy prison test.

There is evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in many areas or particularly in those areas of greatest importance to the well-being of prisoners. Problems/concerns, if left unattended, are likely to become areas of serious concern.

Outcomes for prisoners are poor against this healthy prison test.

There is evidence that the outcomes for prisoners are seriously affected by current practice. There is a failure to ensure even adequate treatment of and/or conditions for prisoners. Immediate remedial action is required.

1. Leadership

Our judgements about leadership take a narrative form and do not result in a score.

- The governor was very experienced and had a good understanding of the significant challenges faced by the prison. His priorities were clear and appropriate, but we found a concerning decline in outcomes in three of our four healthy prison tests.
- Leaders had failed to reassert basic standards, most notably cleanliness.
- Local leaders had developed very good partnership working with the police and other criminal justice services.
- However, they faced major strategic challenges from the supply of illicit items through drone infiltration and some staff corruption. Initiatives were being led locally but there had not been enough support and investment at a national level to reduce the supply of drugs and other illicit items.
- The prison was not fulfilling its role as a training prison, with the provision of education, training and work judged inadequate. Leaders had been too slow in their efforts to improve the provision. They did not have high enough expectations of prisoners and the curriculum was not sufficiently ambitious.
- Leaders did not use information about the population or local and national labour market needs effectively to determine and deliver useful purposeful activities.
- Despite a full officer complement, too many were not available for operational duties, so leaders had put in place a restricted regime which significantly reduced time out of cell for many prisoners.
- The escorting of category A prisoners to and from court, often every day for many months, was causing a significant drain on resources, particularly when more staff were needed to facilitate this. It often left leaders having to restrict the regime further.
- Behaviour management systems were largely ineffective, and leaders had not established a range of incentives to promote positive behaviour. Many prisoners behaved in ways that showed they thought they had little to lose and that their willingness to engage constructively had been lost.
- We saw evidence of wing staff who lacked confidence and competence. They failed to challenge obvious antisocial behaviour and rule breaking which promoted a sense of instability on some of the wings.
- Staff morale was low, particularly for officers. In our survey most frontline operational staff had rarely or never met a manager or mentor to discuss how they were progressing in their role. Middle managers were not always enforcing standards on the wings, and one told us that even when he tried to, staff did not always do what he asked of them.
- Management of the offender management unit (OMU) was strong and staffing levels had improved since 2021. Leaders had worked hard to improve outcomes. They had developed a resettlement hub, and had temporarily secured a member of staff to help prisoners better prepare for employment on release. They had also improved the range of offending behaviour interventions.

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- Senior health care leadership was fragile and did not have a clear strategy for improvement.
- Leaders made excellent use of data to identify disproportionate outcomes impacting fair treatment. The governor held a regular consultation forum for prisoners from a minority ethnic background which was effective, but other forums were not as well developed.

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2. Safety

Outcomes for prisoners against this healthy prison test were poor.

Early days in custody

- Although there was room for improvement, most early days arrangements were adequate for the fairly small number of new arrivals.
- The reception area was untidy.
- New arrivals were greeted well by staff, but peer workers were not used to their full potential either in reception or on the induction wing.
- Prisoners had private interviews with an officer and health professionals and could make a free telephone call and have a shower in reception.
- However, many spent too long there which limited the time they had to settle in on the induction wing before they were locked up for their first night.
- Overall, first night cells were adequately equipped but not particularly welcoming and, in our survey, only 20% said their cell had been clean.
- A reasonable range of information was provided to new arrivals. The induction programme included input from a range of agencies, yet less than half of the prisoners who completed our survey said it covered everything they needed to know.

Promoting positive behaviour

- The availability of drugs, a more geographically diverse population, poor time out of cell and limited access to purposeful activity were all having a significant and negative impact on safety and stability.
- Leaders had developed a clear understanding of the causes of violence, but their actions had yet to improve outcomes.
- Levels of violence were very high and still increasing. Serious assaults were the highest of all prisons holding adult males.
- Violence against staff, including serious assaults, was higher than the average for category B prisons and over three times the average for all adult male prisons.
- In our survey, over half of prisoners said they had felt unsafe at some time during their stay at the prison and only 3% said that the culture at the prison encouraged them to behave well.
- The incentives scheme was not effective and only 15% of survey respondents said that good behaviour was rewarded fairly.
- The adjudications process was in disarray, and around 43% were yet to be completed, which meant there were too few sanctions for very poor behaviour and serious rule breaking.
- We found a lack of order and control on wings, with officers failing to challenge very poor, antisocial or criminal behaviour.
- Most CSIPs we reviewed were based on a good investigation and had clear actions but not all officers we spoke to were aware of their content or their role in delivering the objectives, which meant their use was poor.

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- Men who were self-isolating because they were in fear described feeling neglected.

Segregation

- Most stays were relatively short at under 14 days and most prisoners eventually returned to normal location. Some were segregated for longer, but we were satisfied that leaders made every effort to reintegrate them back on to normal location when it was safe to do so. All prisoners had a care and reintegration plan to promote this.
- The unit was generally clean but suffered from a significant rat infestation.
- Most cells were in a reasonable condition, although some had been out of use for a long time due to damage. Only one set of showers was in working order.
- The daily regime was very poor and often further reduced by staff shortages. The opportunity to shower and take outside exercise was limited.

Use of force

- Incidents where force had been used had doubled since 2021 and the rate was now very high. The rate of PAVA use was amongst the highest of all adult male prisons.
- Body-worn video cameras were not used widely enough by officers and paperwork to justify using force was not always completed adequately. This limited leaders' ability to scrutinise incidents and assure themselves that force had been necessary and proportionate.
- Where they were able to scrutinise incidents, leaders took appropriate action to learn lessons.
- In our review of available footage, we were concerned about some unprofessional, inflammatory language and examples of a lack of control, as well as inappropriate techniques being used.
- Special accommodation in the segregation unit was now used less often but completed paperwork did not always adequately justify its use as a last resort.
- The use of unfurnished cells elsewhere in the prison was rarely properly authorised or overseen.

Security

- The proportion of prisoners testing positive for drug use was very high at 39% over the last 12 months. Finds of weapons and other illicit items were amongst the highest of all adult male prisons.
- There were far too many examples of poor physical security, including a failing CCTV system. It had taken too long for HMPPS and the MoJ to deliver improvements, for example, more secure windows and better netting. As a result, the prison was plagued by drones delivering illicit items.
- A significant amount of intelligence was submitted which provided a clear picture of the threats, including organised criminal activity, violence, drug misuse, threats to contractors, and some staff corruption.

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- Intelligence reports were well managed and immediate action was taken as a result. However, there was a large backlog of those assumed to be of a lower priority.
- Risks and threats posed by corrupt staff was high, but the governor did not shy away from managing this robustly and sending out a clear message to others.
- Partnership working with the police and other criminal justice agencies was impressive.
- Searching was largely intelligence led. Most were undertaken in good time with a high success rate but there were too few suspicion drug tests.
- The management of category A prisoners and those convicted of extremist offences was good.

Safeguarding

- Since our last inspection, there had been six self-inflicted deaths and a further three from non-natural causes. We were told that it was likely that all three were attributed to illicit drug use.
- There had been a steep rise in the rate of self-harm since 2021 it and was currently amongst the highest of all adult male prisons.
- Contributing factors included a lack of purposeful activity, drug availability and its associated debt and frustrations around basic requests not being dealt by staff.
- While leaders had made efforts to understand these causes, not enough had been done to help prisoners cope better while at the prison.
- However, a small number of very complex and prolific self-harming prisoners had been supported well and consequently the severity and frequency of their self-harm had reduced.
- The numbers of Listeners had increased, and access to them was better, but too many prisoners in crisis were subject to more punitive and restrictive actions including force, anti-rip clothing and the removal of personal possessions. Many told us this made them feel worse rather than supported and cared for.
- There were weaknesses in the quality of completed ACCT documentation. Care plans were often very limited or non-existent.
- Too many prisoners on ACCT were segregated without evidence of robust and defensible decisions. The constant supervision cells we looked at were in a poor state and the regime provided to support those in crisis while under constant supervision was inadequate.

3. Respect

Outcomes for prisoners against this healthy prison test were poor.

Staff-prisoner relationships

- The quality of staff-prisoner relationships was negatively impacted by a level of mistrust created by, for example, staff not reliably doing what they promised to do and some corrupt behaviour.
- Relationships and rapport between staff and prisoners were hindered by the lack of time out of cell. Only a third of prisoners in our survey said that a member of staff had talked to them about how they were getting on in the past week. Hardly any prisoners received regular key work sessions, which was very disappointing for such a long-term, high-risk population.
- While some staff were more proactive, too many were lacking confidence and capability in their role. As a result, supervision of prisoners was often limited and too much rule breaking and antisocial behaviour was allowed to continue.
- The use of peer workers was not well developed.
- The Run for your Life programme was a promising initiative to break down barriers between staff and prisoners.

Daily life (living conditions, food and shop)

- Most prisoners lived in single cells which was good, and the prison was not overcrowded.
- Outdoor areas were bleak and littered.
- Many of the wings were grubby and dirty. The poor standard of cleaning was allowed to persist by staff and leaders at all levels. This extended to the gate lodge and many staff rooms.
- The chronic rodent infestation persisted and was made worse by the amount of food thrown out of cell windows. During our inspection, we observed rat droppings, but these were not cleaned up even after we told staff about them.
- In our survey, prisoners were significantly more negative than at similar prisons about access to basics such as daily showers and clean bedding.
- Many cells were ill-equipped and too many were in a state of disrepair. This included broken windows, which prisoners were filling with foam from pillows and mattresses.
- The maintenance contractor was short of staff which led to delays in repairs and a backlog of work.
- Showers were not kept clean.
- The serving of meals was poorly supervised. In our survey, only 16% of prisoners said the quality of food was quite or very good which was significantly worse than similar prisons we have inspected since May 2021.

- This was somewhat mitigated by the self-catering facilities which were highly valued by prisoners. However, there was little oversight of the kitchenettes, and many were left grubby.
- Shop provision was sufficient although not all prisoners could buy frozen food, which limited their opportunity to cook for themselves.

Prisoner consultation, applications and redress

- Consultation arrangements were not fully effective and, in our survey, significantly fewer prisoners than in similar prisons we have inspected since May 2021 said they were consulted on issues.
- Meetings were held irregularly. Many prisoners did not know who their wing representative was or the outcomes from council meetings.
- Prisoners lacked confidence in the complaints system and forms were not readily available on the wings. The quality of responses we reviewed was mostly adequate.
- Most applications were submitted via electronic kiosks but prisoners in our survey were more negative than at similar jails about them being dealt with fairly. Responses were yet to be quality assured by leaders.

Fair treatment and inclusion

- The culture at the prison was being negatively impacted by limited staff-prisoner relationships, which made it difficult for prisoners to have confidence that their individual needs would be recognised and taken seriously.
- Except for the ethnic minority forum, action to promote fair treatment and inclusion was undermined by a persistent lack of attendance at other forums, which meant many were held infrequently or not at all.
- Bimonthly EAT meetings made excellent use of data, but some actions had taken too long to be followed up. There was no overarching strategy guiding this work.
- The social care wing provided a good, supportive environment for some prisoners with disabilities, but those held elsewhere were more negative about the day-to-day support they received.
- There was some good work taking place to support some men with neurodivergent needs, including the work of the neurodiversity support manager. However, this was not fully embedded across the establishment.
- Little support was available to foreign national prisoners. Home Office staff did not attend the prison regularly to provide advice, and wing staff lacked awareness of professional telephone interpretation services.
- Some positive initiatives had been developed to support younger prisoners and veterans. For example, psychologists held monthly drop-in sessions for category A young adults and veterans were given free phone credit to speak with support agencies.
- DIRF investigations we reviewed were mostly of a reasonable quality, though some were cursory. All responses were subject to internal quality assurance and sent to an external organisation for scrutiny.

- The chaplaincy team benefitted from a large number of volunteers and provided good pastoral care, including the provision of religious items.
- Communal worship opportunities were available to most faith groups, but there were limited sessions for prisoners to attend outside of these.

Health, well-being and social care

- Key senior health leaders had only recently been appointed so their knowledge of services was still limited, and their oversight and governance were weak. For example, the risk register did not capture all risks.
- The oversight of serious incidents was poor.
- A robust strategy for the improvement of the service was not yet in place. We found little evidence of effective partnership working.
- The health complaint process was not confidential, and timeliness of replies was not good enough.
- Although a safeguarding policy was in place, health staff were unclear how to make a referral.
- Patients received good psychosocial and clinical support to help address addiction problems, but it was difficult to challenge the perception that cannabis use was socially acceptable and not problematic.
- There was an appropriate range of primary care clinics and access to appointments was good, with no excessive waits to see the GP or other health care professionals.
- Significant improvement was required in the governance of waiting lists, management of long-term conditions and patient applications.
- Mental health services were responsive to demand, and the team were delivering a range of interventions to meet need.
- Patients requiring transfer to a specialist mental health hospital under the Mental Health Act continued to wait far too long for a bed.
- The management of medicines was good. However, officer supervision at hatches was very poor.
- It took too long to complete the administration of medicines, leading to a significant waste of clinical time.
- There was an appropriate range of dental treatments and waiting times were not excessive. However, too many patients did not attend their appointment.
- Some clinical areas were in a poor condition and did not meet infection control standards.
- There was no prison-led health promotion and well-being strategy.
- Prisoners' social care needs were identified and met. Officers' supervision of prisoners on the social care unit was too limited.

4. Purposeful activity

Outcomes for prisoners against this healthy prison test were poor.

Time out of cell

- In our survey, prisoners were significantly more negative about the amount of time they had out of their cell than at similar prisons.
- In our checks, we found 38% locked in their cells during the working day and only 19% were off their wings in purposeful activity, which was poor for a training prison.
- The prison was running a restricted regime which left many men locked in their cells for most of a day-and-a-half each week, during which they could not access domestics or association time.
- Staff shortages caused additional regime curtailments which were a source of significant frustration for prisoners.
- The requirement to keep some prisoners apart from each other impacted on their opportunities to participate in purposeful activity and have better time out of cell.
- Men held on the category A wing received an even more limited regime. Long-term issues with the ventilation tower meant that they could only access the segregation yard for outdoor exercise, and this was often curtailed.
- Time out of cell at the weekend was also poor due to the lack of available officers. In our survey, 46% said they typically spent less than two hours out of their cell.

Library and PE

- The librarian team was proactive and offered services intended to support the reading strategy.
- About half of the population were active borrowers, which was good.
- The gym team was very short of staff, which resulted in daily cancellations to the provision.
- There were no gym courses or qualifications for prisoners to complete and there were few specialised sessions to meet specific needs.

Education, skills and work activity

- Leaders and managers did not have high enough expectations of prisoners, including category A and vulnerable prisoners. The curriculum was not ambitious enough. Leaders had set the threshold for progressing to work at entry level 3 for English and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers did not effectively use the information about the prison population and regional and national employment needs to plan or deliver a range of activities that met needs or the function of a training prison. The range of vocational courses and workshops offered was limited and did not reflect prisoners' plans or ambitions.

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- Leaders and managers were too slow to improve the quality of education, skills and work provision. They had been significantly hampered by the severely restricted regime in place and staff shortages. Although leaders, including those in the PEF provider, had identified accurately the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of education, vocational training and industries, they had failed to put in place the actions they had identified swiftly enough. At the time of the inspection, the impact of the actions that leaders had implemented could not be seen.
- Leaders provided more than enough education, skills and work places for the population. But they did not utilise the spaces they had and almost one-fifth of prisoners were not in activities. There were 56 prisoners on waiting lists. Leaders and managers did not provide sufficient education, vocational, workshop or wider work opportunities for category A or vulnerable prisoners.
- Leaders did not allocate the majority of prisoners to suitable activities that met their learning, work or skills ambitions and goals as they did not have enough information for too many prisoners. Leaders did not ensure that prisoners had fair and equal opportunities for promotion into advanced roles in industries and work. The pay for prisoners in education, industry workshops and work activities was equitable.
- The prison education framework (PEF) provider ensured that most prisoners benefitted from a well-planned and well-taught education curriculum that was sequenced in a logical way. Prisoners developed a range of useful knowledge, skills and behaviours to support them in their next steps. Teachers provided helpful support to prisoners in English and mathematics lessons through scaffolding activities and effective feedback to help them improve. Teachers in bakery and catering did not provide feedback to help prisoners to improve their written work.
- Prisoners who took up their allocation to English and mathematics made good progress and a high proportion completed their programme and gained qualifications.
- Staff were suitably experienced and qualified for their roles.
- The induction process was ineffective. Although guidance was given on opportunities for education, activities for work had not been sufficiently provided. This meant that prisoners did not have a full knowledge of the options available to them. Leaders did not provide appropriate careers information, advice and guidance. Around half of prisoners had no personal learning plan. PID workers had not received training to provide advice and guidance to prisoners.
- Attendance at education, industries and work was poor. Prisoners did not attend punctually and consequently did not develop the work ethic and attitudes expected by employers.
- Most of the work on wings, in workshops and other areas was low skilled. In about half of industries it was mundane and repetitive. Prisoners who engaged in this did not access a curriculum that enabled them to develop the skills and knowledge that would be of benefit when seeking employment on release. In a few industries, for example packing and laundry, the development of a positive work ethic was hindered by the lack of work. There were few accredited qualifications in these work areas. Too many prisoners were not sufficiently motivated.

- Managers had not ensured that domestic work on the wings was suitably challenging. Managers had not provided sufficient training or, too often, enough protective clothing and other equipment to enable prisoners to be adequately equipped and take pride in their work. These prisoners developed few new skills and knowledge.
- A few prisoners benefitted from studying distance learning courses, including degrees in business management, court law and master's degrees in global development. Leaders had not ensured that the Virtual Campus was available for these prisoners to use.
- The great majority of prisoners in education, skills and work were well behaved, polite, and had respectful relationships with peers and staff. Workshops and classrooms were calm, well-ordered and conducive to learning and work. However, a small number of prisoners vaped in these environments and were not always challenged.
- Leaders did not provide appropriate training on British values and did not raise awareness of topics such as diversity, inclusion and mutual respect sufficiently. A few prisoners made inappropriate comments about people of a different race and showed a lack of respect to their peers. They did not respect individual differences.
- Leaders did not provide appropriate training on the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Prisoners did not receive guidance on how to spot the signs of radicalisation in themselves or others.
- Prisoners benefited from courses that were delivered by charity or subcontractor providers such as music and physical fitness courses. These courses increased prisoners' confidence, resilience and allowed them to release their emotions in a positive way. Leaders provided opportunities for competitions and activities that prisoners could join, such as chess and poetry. However, too few prisoners were aware of these opportunities.
- Leaders were too slow to roll out the reading strategy and its impact was minimal. However, leaders had identified prisoners with low-level reading skills and had put a range of activities in place to support them. For example, Shannon Trust mentors helped them learn to read and library staff provided Storybook Dad sessions.

5. Preparation for release

Outcomes for prisoners against this healthy prison test were reasonably good.

Children and families and contact with the outside world

- Consultation arrangements to promote family ties were excellent. Leaders regularly surveyed prisoners for their views and held forums with family members.
- Leaders monitored those not receiving visits, and the family support worker was active in helping these prisoners.
- However, there was limited support available for men to manage events such as childcare proceedings and there were no courses available to help them develop parenting skills.
- Visits provision had improved since our last inspection, with more sessions available each week.
- Secure video calling was available, but it was underused, and some prisoners told us that they were not sure how to book a call.
- Prisoners appreciated access to monthly family days and there were plans to increase their frequency.
- The main visits hall was spacious, well-equipped and welcoming. The category A prisoner visits hall was smaller, but still provided a good environment.

Reducing reoffending

- The prison held a high-risk population mostly convicted of serious violent offences. Almost all were serving long sentences, including about a third serving indeterminate sentences.
- Work aimed at reducing reoffending had improved since our last inspection, with some positive initiatives to improve outcomes. For example, there was an improved range of offending behaviour programmes and locally funded resettlement help which was well coordinated.
- The OMU was well led and nearly up to full staffing capacity following protracted and challenging periods of staff shortages.
- Overall, the level of contact between POMs and prisoners had improved since our last inspection and was now more proactive and responsive to risk and need. Almost all prisoners we spoke to were complimentary about the levels of contact and the quality of support they had received from their POM.
- This good engagement included POMs being willing to make contact with their prisoners following evidence of poor behaviour.
- Most prisoners had an OASys but assessments and reviews were often late. The quality of sentence plans was good.

- Most prisoners in our case sample had made reasonable progress towards achieving their sentence plan targets and there was a good focus on the delivery of work to challenge attitudes, thinking and behaviour.
- However, there was less evidence of prisoners achieving other sentence plan targets such as engaging in meaningful education, skills and work.
- Security reviews for category A prisoners were timely, thorough, and supported by comprehensive information.
- Reviews for other prisoners were not always completed on time and prisoners' involvement was variable, but decisions in those we reviewed were defensible.
- Too many category C prisoners had not been able to move on to a more suitable prison but there had been some improvement in this very recently.
- Knowledge of and support given to ISPs had improved. There were effective joint meetings between POMs and psychologists with regular forums for prisoners.

Public protection

- Over three-quarters of the population were assessed as presenting a high or very high risk of serious harm to others, and a similar number were eligible for MAPPA because of the serious nature of their offences.
- The identification of risks posed by newly arrived prisoners remained sound.
- The scope of the IRMM had improved and now considered all prisoners approaching release to ensure risks could be managed robustly.
- Restrictions on contact with children were generally well managed, and the monitoring of prisoners' telephone calls had improved.
- Information sharing between the OMU and community probation teams was mostly good. The quality of contributions to community MAPPA panels were sufficiently detailed and meaningful.
- Risk management plans were of good quality.

Interventions and support

- The range of offending-related programmes was appropriate to meet most of the risk and needs of prisoners.
- It was positive that interventions for high-risk prisoners convicted of violent offences and for those involved with gangs had been introduced since our last inspection.
- Prisoners were appropriately prioritised for an accredited programme and there was some flexibility that enabled some to access the intervention earlier in their sentence, if deemed appropriate.
- Some prisoners had been transferred to another prison to access a specific programme not available at Manchester which supported their progression.
- The psychology team and OMU staff worked well together to manage some prisoners with very complex and challenging needs, including those who lacked motivation to engage and some serving IPP sentences.
- Manchester was not designated as a resettlement prison so was not resourced to provide this help. However, leaders had successfully negotiated the involvement of an employment lead manager to develop

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more support. Leaders had also funded some other resettlement help, including opening bank accounts, obtaining ID and making claims for benefits on release.

Returning to the community

- In the previous 12 months, 70 prisoners had been released into the community, most returning to areas outside of Greater Manchester.
- Leaders had been innovative in their efforts to meet these challenges and the introduction of the resettlement hub to hold monthly multi-agency, pre-release planning meetings was a positive initiative.
- Joint working between POMs and COMs was good and helped to plan for the prisoner's release.
- Data showed that most prisoners had somewhere to stay on the night of release and almost half went to an approved probation hostel, but overall only 20% of releases had sustainable accommodation.
- The SDS40 early release scheme had been well managed.
- Support on the day of release was limited.