



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Hewell

**For reporting year
1 October 2021 – 30 September 2022**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Hewell is a local adult male category B prison.

The prison is in a rural setting, three miles from Bromsgrove and three miles from Redditch; public transport is infrequent, and there is a half-mile walk from the main road to the prison buildings.

While classified as a local prison, Hewell is required to accept men from courts across a wide geographic area when local provision is not available for them.

Hewell is a purpose-built prison, opened in 1993, with single and double cells and shared showers. More than 40% of cells designed for one prisoner hold two.

Certified normal accommodation and operational capacity:

- Baseline certified normal accommodation (CNA): 998 ('uncrowded')
- Maximum CNA 1,074 ('crowded')
- Operational capacity: 900

On average, 50% of prisoners at Hewell are on remand. Remand and sentenced prisoners are not separated.

A quarter of the population is normally categorised as presenting a high risk of harm to others, with a low number of organised crime nominals (four at the end of the reporting period).

The prison has the following house blocks and specialist units:

- HB1: General house block for sentenced and unsentenced prisoners.
- Reception and HB2: This fulfils the function of early days and induction unit.
- HB3: General house block for sentenced and unsentenced prisoners
- HB4: House block for prisoners who have drug or alcohol dependencies and related conditions.
- The Oak unit: A 15-bed therapeutic unit for prisoners who have severe mental health issues or complex social, emotional and psychological needs.
- HB6A: House block for men deemed vulnerable prisoners.
- HB6B: General house block for sentenced and unsentenced prisoners, though this has been closed for refurbishment for most of the reporting year.
- Multi-faith chaplaincy and worship space
- A CMU (segregation) unit which can house 25 men.
- A visitors' reception centre is used by families coming for visits, and is occasionally used by men being released as a discharge lounge.

There are currently only two cells which are adapted for wheelchair users. Funds have been secured to create a further two cells.

A virtual court centre is housed within the prison, which allows prisoners to attend court without leaving the prison, and creates a means for solicitors and other professionals, such as offender managers, to engage with their clients.

Prisoners, with the exception of those in segregation, now have in-cell telephony, which was extended during Covid restrictions and enabled social video calls.

Service providers:

- Physical health: Practice Plus Group (formerly Care UK)
- Mental health: Practice Plus Group
- Substance misuse treatment: Practice Plus Group
- Learning and skills: Novus
- Library: Novus
- Community rehabilitation: the Probation Service
- Careers information and advice: Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP)
- Children and family support services: YMCA, Barnardo's and Mother's Union
- Shaw Trust who assist with learning, employability and skills.
- Escort contractor: GEOAmey

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

Covid-19: The regime for the prison followed all guidelines issued to it throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to gather information and observe and interact with prisoners. The Board has tried to cover as much ground as possible in these restrained circumstances, but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints.

At the start of the Covid-19 restrictions, the Board took the opportunity to create statistics from the daily handover report and monitored several categories of incidents. Necessarily, some events are interpreted so that, for example, an incident recorded under self-harm will not be recorded under 'medical'. This analysis ceased at the end of the reporting year.

Throughout the pandemic extraordinary efforts were made to keep the prison functioning as safely and humanely as possible, and due diligence exercised to reduce the spread of infection. HMP Hewell was able to return to a normal regime ahead of other similar prisons but staff absences due to Covid continued to interrupt the regime. The impact of the restricted regime led to prisoners spending unacceptably long times in their cells, unable to engage meaningfully with others or engage in purposeful activity.

Performance support programme and the growth project: At the start of the reporting period, the prison had embarked on a mandatory performance support programme, formerly called special measures. The pandemic impacted the implementation of improvements and changes, but significant progress was made, aided by additional funding and access to pilot projects. This included improvements to the physical environment and cleanliness, cultural change intended to improve staff-prisoner relationships, and staff retention and engagement.

Security audit by HMPPS: A full security audit was undertaken in August 2022 and a draft report and recommendations were issued in September 2022, right at the end of our reporting year.

Leadership: The prison has had the same Governor throughout the reporting period. There have been several reshuffles of governors with functional leads during the year, partly as a result of staff moving on to other roles outside Hewell, and partly to provide strength and expertise in areas identified as needing change and improvement. The Board has been kept informed of the rationale for these changes by the Governor.

Remand prisoners and court delays: In common with all prisons, Hewell has been severely affected by delays in the court system, meaning that men on remand are detained for longer periods awaiting hearings and sentencing.

The Board is pleased to report that the momentum towards improvement that we evidenced in our last report has continued and been built on. The prison is maintaining its progress and is now safer, better managed, cleaner and more humane than in the past. The general feel of the prison and its cleanliness are to be commended.

The ambitious programme of culture change and a drive towards a prisoner-focussed approach is gaining traction, though we are of the view that there is a long way to go before this is embedded across the whole prison. The individual pathway model to provide an individualised response to each prisoner's needs, and the key work model to ensure personalised contact and support for each prisoner, are key to the implementation of this programme. Progress in these areas has been frustratingly slow despite much evidence of good work and a desire to make substantive change. These innovative approaches need, in our view, continued focus and resources to allow their benefits to be felt, and we caution against a loss of momentum.

In general, we view the work of managing HMP Hewell as pushing a stone uphill – a challenge that is being relentlessly pursued (and which is moving in the right direction) but in the face of many obstacles. These obstacles include the particular role that is demanded on a local prison, the wider challenges of the criminal justice system and the broader societal issues that impact many of the individuals who find themselves in the prison.

We are concerned to report, once again, on the limits placed on the progress within the prison caused by the physical condition of the fabric of the building and the impact of a continued lack of investment in the buildings. Despite the welcome investment which has addressed some concerns, maintenance issues remain a challenge – they cause frustration to both staff and prisoners and, crucially, affect the smooth running of the prison. Investment and hard work cannot mitigate the impact of the design of the prison which leads men to share cells designed for a single person and to eat next to their toilets – this is a disgrace. Conditions for prisoners and staff with disabilities, though somewhat improved during the year, remain inadequate.

The welcome impact of the funding from the prison performance support programme, which has allowed some physical improvements as well as access to intensive support and participation in innovative pilot schemes and trials, is noted. These successes illustrated the potential impact of investment and intervention.

Yet again we have to report on the inherent challenges presented by the role of HMP Hewell as a local prison. The churn of men, the number of men on remand (often for extended periods), and the mixture of categories/disparate needs all present daily problems for running the regime and offering meaningful activity and preparation for release. We are concerned about the inability to afford remanded prisoners the entitlements relevant to their status.

That prisoners are still being held under Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences remains, in our opinion, a national disgrace. However conscientiously and humanely these individuals are treated in the prison – and we acknowledge that their numbers are slowly declining – the continued existence of these sentences shames us all.

The lack of appropriate accommodation for individuals with the most pressing needs remains a concern. That some of these people are accommodated in prison at all, let alone in a general local prison, is unacceptable. The genuine care and diligence with which these individuals are treated at Hewell do not mitigate the lack of appropriate alternative arrangements within the prison system.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

There were three deaths in custody in the year, with just one of them not being as a result of natural causes. Self-harm numbers rose slightly. Self-harming incidents remain of concern, and although there have been fluctuations during the year, the number has increased. The highest number of incidents occurred in HB2 which is used for reception and induction. Incidents in the segregation unit were low.

Prisoner-on-staff and prisoner-on-prisoner assaults have remained stable over the reporting period and reduced from previous years. The Board is aware of only a few incidents of self-isolation and has noted that when this occurs every effort is made to encourage the prisoner to engage.

Self-harming incidents remain of concern, and although there have been fluctuations during the year, the number has increased. The highest number of incidents occurred in HB2 which is used for reception and induction. Incidents in the segregation unit were low.

Use of force incidents remain low and are significantly lower than in similar prisons. Use of force is diligently and effectively monitored, and no incident viewed on video, or reported, has raised concern about the safe or humane treatment of the prisoners involved. The number of cell fires/damage and incidents at height is minimal.

The introduction of airport-style security at the gatehouse reduces the potential for staff and official visitors to bring in illicit items; no data is available on the effectiveness of this change. It is also noted that no checks are undertaken for staff and visitors leaving the prison.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The limitations of the prison building and cell sharing continue to concern the Board, particularly the continued use of cells designed for one person housing two men, who have to eat in their cells next to a shared open toilet; this impacts their privacy and dignity and is not considered humane in 2022. Cell sharing can have a negative impact on discipline within the prison as many men refuse to cell share, and it leaves some men open to coercive behaviours by others.

A lack of appropriate accommodation and wheelchair access reduced safety in the prison and increases the risk of accidents and compromises the safe care of prisoners who are disabled or have accessibility needs.

The focus on cleanliness and hygiene now appears to be embedded in the operation of the prison, supported by additional resources through the performance support programme. Despite the challenge presented by unfeasibly low budgets and stubbornly broken equipment in the kitchens, we note that the food provision has improved during the year. Food quantity, quality and choice are generally satisfactory and often good.

Physical accommodation in segregation has improved and is being further improved. The Board has observed the safe and humane treatment of men who needed to be restrained or moved under the use of force procedures, and compassion shown to those with severe mental health problems or personality disorders who are cared for in segregation, which is an inappropriate setting, awaiting more appropriate provision.

Progress on prisoners' pathway planning, key working and rehabilitation has been slow and the intended change of ethos is not yet assured.

While the process for prisoner applications and complaints is efficient, there is wide variation in the quality and tone of responses indicating that staff are not problem-solving, proactive or equitable in their responses to prisoners.

A re-launched incentives scheme is not considered to have been successful in motivating men and will be reviewed in an attempt to make it meaningful in a prison with a high number of remand prisoners.

Despite improvements to data collection and analysis, there has been a lack of momentum in respect of equality and diversity. While the Board is satisfied there is no direct discrimination, people with protected characteristics and vulnerabilities do not have full access to their rights within the prison and the principles are not fully embedded in the day-to-day practice and behaviours of all staff.

The chaplaincy is well integrated within the prison and provides for all faith groups. A recent quality assurance audit by HMPPS commended the team in many areas, including their pastoral support and role in segregation, reception, and assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviewing. Chaplaincy resources are very stretched, and it remains to be seen if they are able to implement their plan to reinstate meetings with prisoners before release, and to attend pre-release planning meetings. Areas for improvement include integrated worship for vulnerable prisoners of the Christian faith and improving disabled access to the chaplaincy.

How well are prisoners' health and well-being needs met?

The Board noted improvement in the provision of physical healthcare, with access to GPs and dentists not ideal but comparable with the community. Dispensation of medication has improved. Integration of health care within the reception and induction area has improved assessment and continuity of care where required. External social care provision is provided in a timely manner, but when manual handling is required, the physical limitations of some cells make safe caring difficult. Hewell has just two cells adapted for men with disability/accessibility needs, with two more being created, which is still woefully inadequate. The appointment of a neurodiversity officer at the end of the reporting year is noted.

In respect of mental health, the 15-bedded Oak Unit, for men with complex mental health needs, is now established and has a positive effect on the lives of many men who were previously troubled and troublesome. We are concerned that lack of accessible accommodation elsewhere in the prison for otherwise well prisoners who use wheelchairs sometimes results in them being accommodated with some of the most unwell individuals in the establishment.

The Board reiterates its concerns about men who are accommodated in segregation as it is the safest place available in the establishment but does meet their need for specialist placements outside of Hewell.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

We are yet to be persuaded of the efficacy of the prison's systems of preparing prisoners for release though acknowledge that there are many other agencies and societal issues involved in this area. We acknowledge that the Board has had limited resources to monitor this area fully during the year.

We have seen increased efforts to provide prisoners with meaningful education, vocational training and employment, but the Board has insufficient evidence this year, due to our own resource limitations, to make a substantive comment on its reach and appropriateness. We were aware that staffing shortages had a negative impact on the provision. We recognised that the high number of remand prisoners and the churn of prisoners at Hewell is a challenge and mitigates against effective delivery of education, training and resettlement.

Excellent work is carried out in the prison helping some prisoners maintain and strengthen links with their families and the rollout of in-cell telephony and the use of social video calls both help in this regard. There are excellent examples of work undertaken by the children and family's team, but we remain unpersuaded that sufficient emphasis is placed on family contact issues across the prison and the impact this has on resettlement and reducing reoffending.

3.3 Main areas for development

The areas addressed to the Minister and Prison Service are structural and systemic. They are raised year after year and have been exacerbated by Covid-19, an increased number of prisoners and length of sentences, and interminable delays in the courts which increased the number of remand prisoners being squeezed into already overcrowded and often inhumane accommodation. It is also of concern that while research, knowledge and skills in understanding the impact of trauma, neurodiversity, and mental health on behaviour has grown in our society, there is little evidence of it being applied in prison regimes, to the rehabilitation of prisoners and reduction in offending. This is overlaid by increasing homelessness and poverty.

TO THE MINISTER

- There should be a more concerted effort to reduce the number of IPP prisoners.
- There should be increased services and level of provision for prisoners who have severe mental health, psychological or social needs, many of whom are held in segregation for their own safety; this would free up prison resources to work with other prisoners
- There should be capital investment to end the practice of men cell sharing, with an open toilet in the space where they are expected to sleep, eat and

live; this would reduce friction between prisoners and increase prisoner respect and engagement with the regime. This is an inhumane practice.

- Ministers should use their influence to reduce the number of remanded prisoners, and the length of time for cases to be heard in courts.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- The Prison Service should recognise the gap between rhetoric and reality in respect of their national aspirations for resettlement and reducing reoffending. However good the education, vocational training and employment support in prison, homelessness, poverty and the current economic situation makes many of the stated aspirations totally unrealistic. This is exacerbated by the high number of remand prisoners in local prisons like Hewell. Ministers should support the Prison and Probation services by setting and achieving relevant and necessary targets for services that provide homes, access to employment and skills training after prison.
- While the Prison Service cannot replace all prison buildings that are unfit for purpose, it should allocate increased funding for improvements, particularly in respect of men who have a disability, accessibility or social care need.
- The Prison Service, working with the Probation Service, should place more emphasis on therapeutic interventions to address longstanding trauma, neurodiversity and social/psychological problems of prisoners. Too many come into the prison and leave without any intervention; this mitigates against successful resettlement and reduction in reoffending. It is not enough to pin change on the introduction of key work delivered by officers with minimal training in this skilled area.
- Linked to the comments above, the Prison Service should lobby for sufficient resources to staff prisons appropriately and ensure that staff conditions of service attract and retain the right people to prison roles.
- Healthcare contracts should be reviewed to ensure that there is safe out-of-hours cover; this will improve the health, safety and wellbeing of prisoners, reduce the number of staff hours needed to escort men to outside provision, and reduce the pressure on already overstretched ambulance and NHS resources.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Maintain the integrity of the Oak unit, build on its success and continue to support and enhance its development; reduce the use of this unit for men who do not meet the criteria but are housed there due to lack of other accommodation.
- Increase momentum on culture change to ensure staff are curious, proactive and engaged and do not accept the unacceptable; identify and decisively address people or process issues that are blocking change. Pathway planning and key work is core to the change and should be given priority in all but the direst of staffing situations.
- Continue to seek investment/funding opportunities to improve the physical building, in particular facilities for prisoners who have disabilities and accessibility needs.

- Implement the findings of the security audit to improve the safety of the prison to reduce the potential for illicit items and the impact of this on prisoner behaviour and the effective running of the regime.
- Take steps to ensure that the focus on maintaining and fostering family links becomes embedded across all aspects of the prison.
- Remove the seeming paralysis around embedding a focus on equality issues within the prison.

3.4 Progress since the last report

The Board's report for 2020-21 included requests for improvements to the following areas, with the following actions resulting:

TO THE MINISTER	
<p>The Board again restates its previously recorded concern at the prevalence and treatment of prisoners held in custody indefinitely under indeterminate sentences for public protection. We have seen no evidence of attempts to manage the sentences of these individuals with any focus on forward progression. Nor have we seen recognition that the despair of endless detention results in self-destructive behaviour, leading to the use of segregation and challenges to discipline within the prison. This, in turn, causes these prisoners to fail at the parole board. We urge the minister to take up the issue of prisoners still being held in custody indefinitely despite the power to pass such sentences being removed ten years ago.</p>	<p><i>Board members continue to meet IPP prisoners, both those never released and many, many years over tariff and those recalled, who despair of ever being released.</i></p>
<p>The Board remains concerned about the difficulties encountered in transferring prisoners with severe mental health/behavioural issues to an environment where they can be treated effectively. Again, will the minister work with colleagues in other departments to ensure greater availability of more suitable locations for these prisoners?</p>	<p><i>This remains an area of high concern.</i></p>
TO THE PRISON SERVICE	

In the light of long remand periods, review the policy that remand prisoners are exempt from some of the obligations that go with effective resettlement and opportunities are provided.	<i>This remains a concern.</i>
Ensure that prisoners inappropriately located at HMP Hewell (by reason of their category, etc.) are speedily moved to appropriate prisons.	<i>This remains a concern.</i>
Provide funding to ensure that those with mobility issues can move around the prison e.g., lifts and widened doorways.	<i>The Board has observed some work making the prison more accessible (e.g. the creation of ramps), however, there are still insufficient lifts and prisoners in wheelchairs are still unable to get through the doorway of their cells.</i>
When the category D Hewell Grange was open prisoners were employed to maintain the approach to the prison, cut the verges and clear and tidy the car parks. Those prisoners are no longer present and funding to fulfil these requirements is necessary.	<i>This has improved; the approach to the prison is now regularly maintained.</i>
TO THE PRISONS AND PROBATION OMBUDSMAN	
Please conclude the report into the death on 14 June 2018, so that an inquest may be carried out.	<i>No report has been received; however, we have been informed that a criminal prosecution is awaited.</i>
TO THE GOVERNOR	
Maintain the improvement of the early days' unit, including the improved transition from the induction unit to permanent accommodation.	<i>Despite improvements to the process and staffing, the necessary culture shift has not been achieved. This remains a concern.</i>
Improve identification of those prisoners with learning difficulties/disabilities and their consequential support.	<i>A dedicated neurodiversity officer was appointed at the end of the reporting year.</i>
Maintain culture change pressure to have a consistent standard of staff behaviour towards prisoners.	<i>The Board has observed improvements in some areas and some staff, but the culture change has not been fully achieved.</i>

<p>Improve the handling of prison complaints and applications systems, focusing particularly on those which raise issues of discrimination, to ensure that such concerns are appropriately addressed and where necessary dealt with through the DIRF process.</p>	<p><i>The Board has noted that some staff have adopted a more problem-solving, prisoner-centred approach to dealing with prisoner concerns and complaints; this is not true of other staff who still default to using systems and processes as a barrier to better staff/prisoner interactions and relationship building.</i></p>
<p>Improve the cleanliness and appearance of the approach to the prison.</p>	<p><i>The approach to the prison has improved. The Board has noted a significant improvement in cleanliness and the appearance of the accommodation for prisoners.</i></p>
<p>Maintain a focus on equality issues to ensure that all prisoners are treated fairly. For example, but not exclusively: the provision of wheelchairs in reception, translation services and information in other languages.</p>	<p><i>While there has been improved monitoring of equalities, and evidence of activity to raise staff awareness, it is not yet fully embodied in attitude, behaviour or practice.</i></p>

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Reception remains a clean and welcoming space. There is a perpetual lack of wheelchairs for use by men arriving at Hewell and this presents challenges, to both those few individuals and staff, in locating them safely and in a dignified manner on arrival at the prison.

The late arrival of men to Hewell continues to cause problems and put pressure on both prisoners and staff to ensure that appropriate processes are conducted in a timely fashion. The process that has to be followed when prisoners are only in Hewell overnight (in transit to another prison) is exactly the same as for prisoners expected to stay, i.e. they have to contact the prisoner's GP and request records. This is considered to be both time-consuming and seems irrelevant.

The Board is aware of the impressive use of orderlies and Listeners within reception to provide reassurance and guidance to new arrivals and those leaving the prison. A chaplain is available in reception for all new admissions.

The introduction of the body scanner for new arrivals continues to have a significant positive impact, discovering illicit items arriving at the jail. Men found to be concealing items can be sent straight to segregation until it is resolved, lowering the risk of illicit items getting into general circulation.

A 14-day reception and induction programme uniting reception and a dedicated house block for new prisoners was implemented during the year with mixed success. It was intended that by the time men were allocated to a house block the practicalities of prison life and the resolution of personal matters outside of prison would have been resolved. More importantly, the men would be assessed, including identification of neurodiversity needs, and a prison pathway plan established. By the end of the reporting period, the system was in place, but the quality of the experience was variable. The Board heard from prisoners, and officers, that basic concerns and practicalities had not been addressed, leaving this for officers on the receiving house block. In addition, negative comments were made about the attitude of some of the staff working on the programme, indicating that they were not positive about the change. The Governor and senior leadership team became aware, reviewed the operation of reception and induction and adjusted the management of the unit. When working as intended, the Board commends this change.

The Board has evidence of good relationships between staff and prisoners and of constructive and valuable peer support from other prisoners in both reception and the induction units, with a humane response demonstrated. Individuals in custody for the first time are identified and provided with additional support. Even with the specialised provision, the large and noisy induction unit might be considered an impossibly daunting place for such individuals.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Within the current reporting year, there have been three deaths in custody, two apparently from natural causes and one apparently self-inflicted. All of these deaths are awaiting inquest. There has been an initial PPO report into one of the deaths

There have been PPO investigations and reports received for all deaths in previous years, except the one in June 2018. We understand that a criminal prosecution is awaited regarding this death.

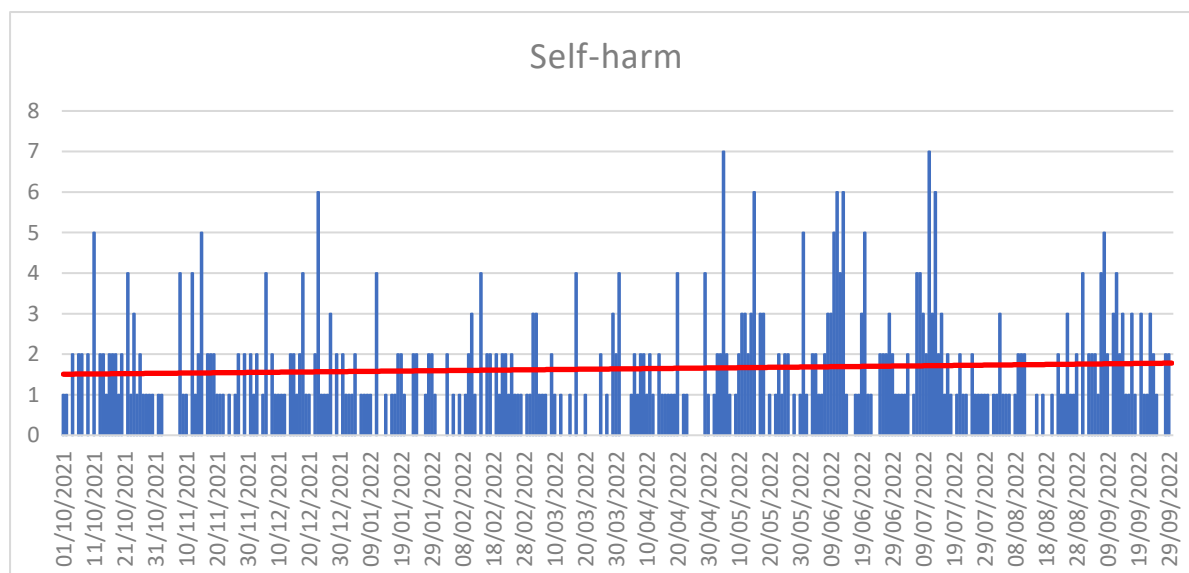
There have been inquests into all previous deaths except the one in 2018 and one in March 2021.

Self-harm October 2021 – September 2022

	HB1	HB2	HB3	HB4	HB6	SEG	Oak Unit	Reception	Other	Total
Oct	3	10	7	7	12	1	1	0	1	42
Nov	0	11	5	5	14	1	4	0	0	40
Dec	10	5	5	15	8	2	10	0	0	55
Jan	2	8	4	5	9	1	6	0	0	35
Feb	9	5	1	9	5	1	4	0	0	34
Mar	4	9	5	8	2	2	5	0	0	35
Apr	4	3	2	5	3	3	7	0	0	27
May	7	20	2	12	3	4	8	0	1	57
Jun	4	28	9	10	4	0	4	1	0	60
Jul	6	19	10	5	11	6	3	0	1	61
Aug	1	6	6	12	4	5	2	0	1	37
Sep	3	17	9	8	6	4	7	0	2	56
	53	142	65	101	81	30	61	1	6	539

Source: HMP Hewell daily handover reports

The highest occurrence is in HB2 which is the early days unit, HB4 which focuses on drugs and alcohol rehabilitation and HB6 which houses vulnerable prisoners.



Source: HMP Hewell Daily Handover Reports

This chart shows the reported incidence of self-harm from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022, with a trend line in red. Although the trend indicates an increase in the number of incidents, it is very slight.

Each of these reported incidents represents an individual. Prisoner B in our observational study (appendix) is one such person. Many members of staff from many different parts of the prison provided support for this person from when he arrived through to his court case and sentencing. The Board believes that this is not unusual and typical of the care provided to prisoners who self-harm and are in crisis.

ACCTS opened October 2021 – September 2022

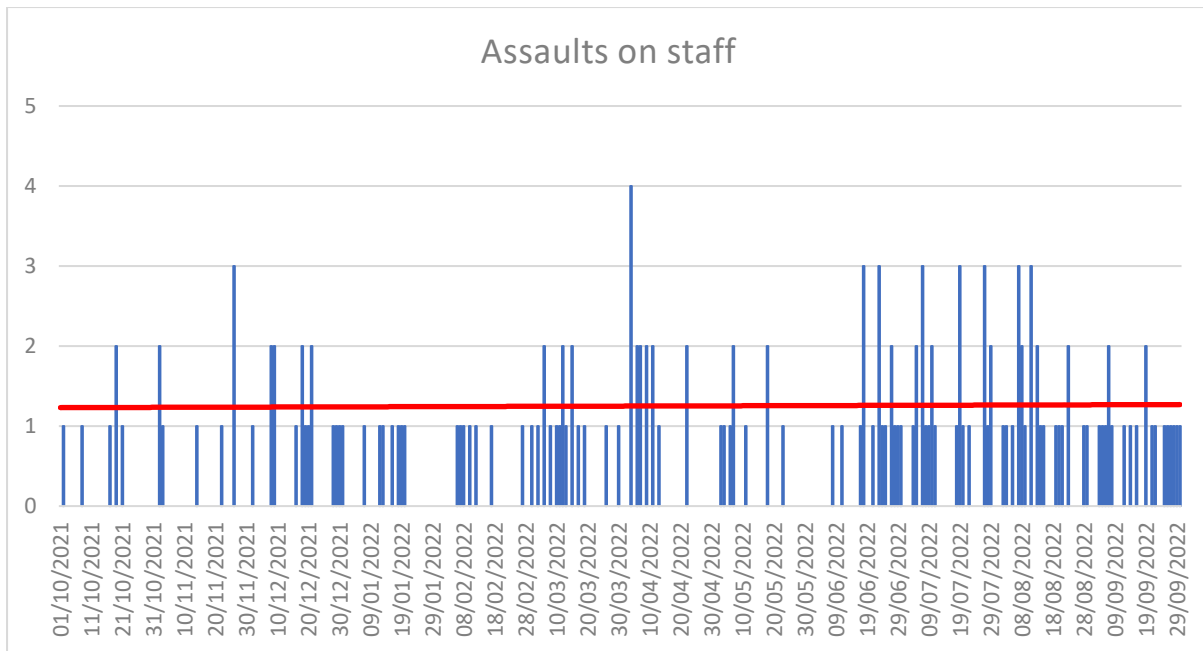
	HB1	HB2	HB3	HB4	HB6	SEG	OAK	Reception	Other	Total
Oct	6	11	4	14	18	4	3	33	2	77
Nov	6	11	4	14	18	4	3	33	2	95
Dec	5	16	6	7	8	1	2	24	4	73
Jan	4	21	5	14	7	2	1	15	1	70
Feb	6	17	2	5	2	2	0	21	1	56
Mar	9	21	5	8	0	3	1	27	2	75
Apr	4	13	3	1	6	3	3	21	4	58
May	7	17	2	6	7	2	5	23	1	70
June	7	27	6	10	3	2	3	25	0	83
July	8	22	13	4	13	9	2	22	1	94
Aug	3	18	2	9	5	8	0	18	1	64
Sep	4	16	11	5	6	7	2	19	2	72
	69	265	67	97	93	65	25	281	21	

Source: HMP Hewell daily handover reports

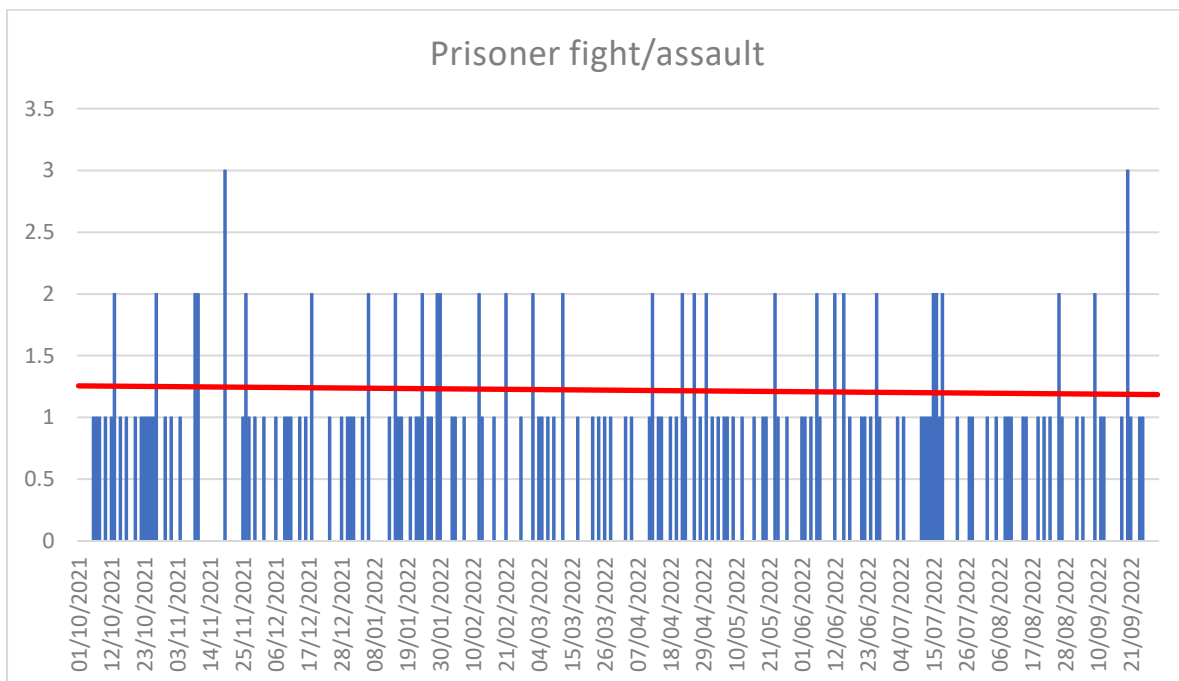
4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

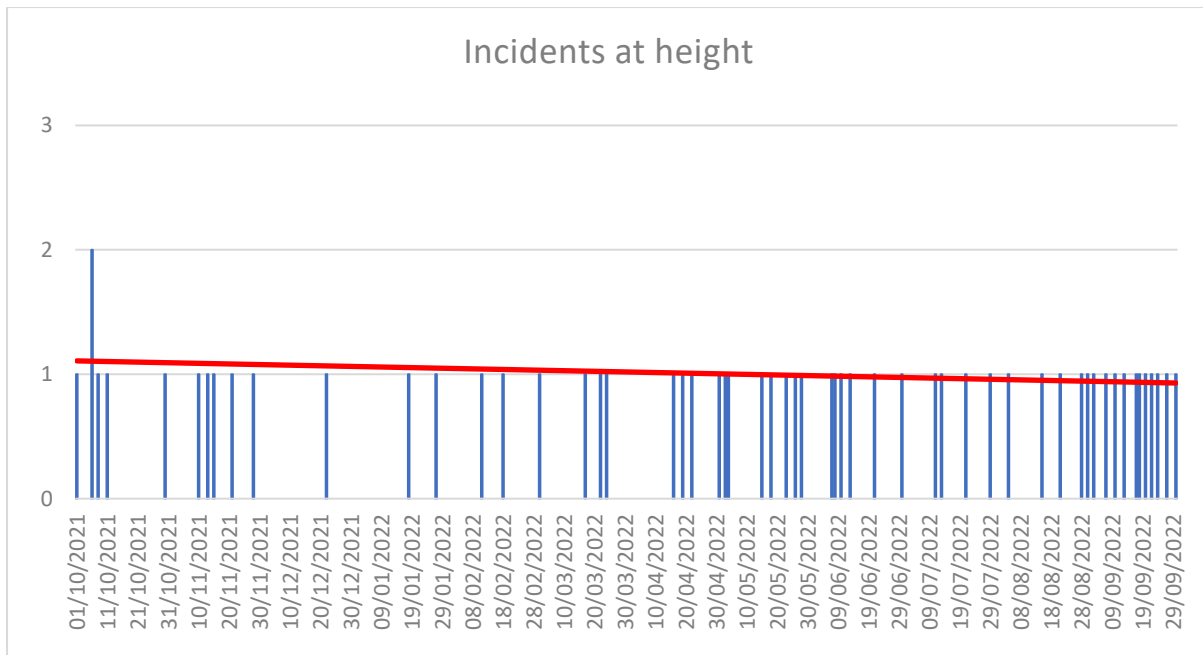
The separate accommodation of vulnerable prisoners tends to work well, and these individuals are, on the whole, treated with respect and dignity. We have evidence of isolated incidents of this cohort being subjected to abuse or intimidation when attending healthcare appointments or moving around the prison.

Prisoner-on-staff and prisoner-on-prisoner assaults have remained stable over the reporting period and are reduced from previous years. Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and fights have reduced slightly, as illustrated in the following two graphs.

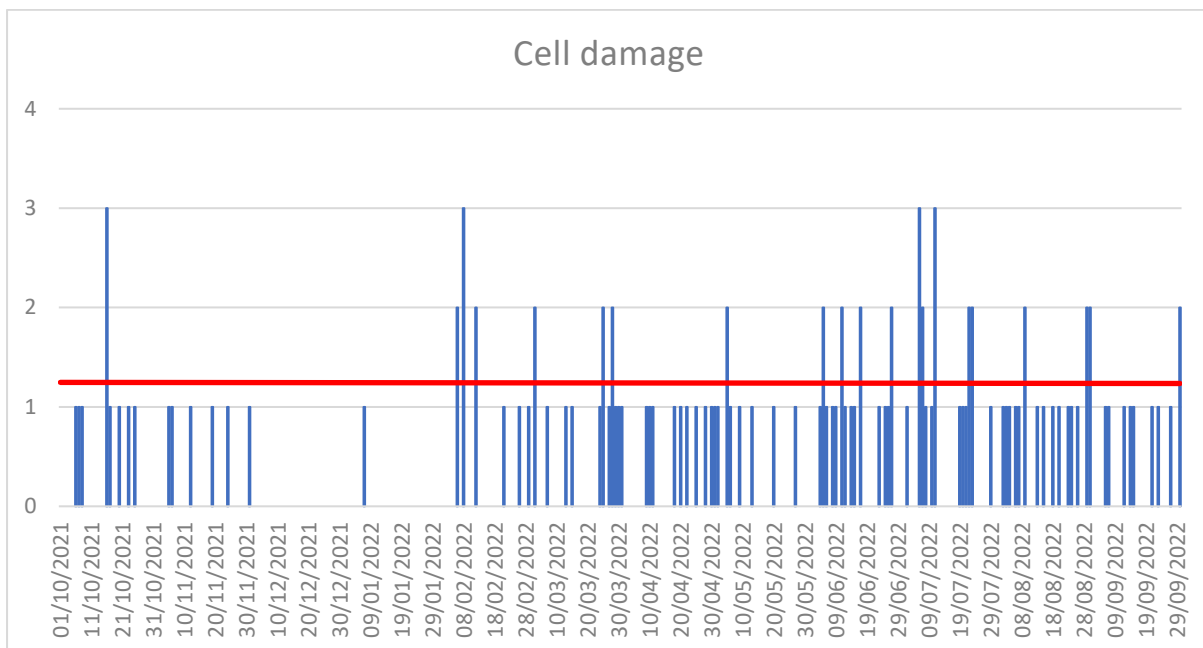


Source: HMP Hewell Daily Handover Reports





Reported incidents of damage to cells by prisoners show a relatively stable situation.



Source: HMP Hewell daily handover reports

4.4 Use of force

Use of force meetings are held monthly and attended by governors and operational custodial managers. The Board receives the monthly data pack and has attended three meetings during the year. At each meeting, the data and trends are reviewed, and a random selection of video recordings, taken during use of force incidents, are viewed and analysed. The IMB is invited to ask for specific video footage of any incident that it wishes to view. The need for individual, team or system

improvements, and future training needs, are identified and follow-up actions are agreed.

The following table shows that instances of force being used have decreased over the past three years:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	88	65	89	74	56	84	59	47	51	44	39	52
2021	38	32	50	33	40	38	43	37	47	42	42	52
2022	46	34	37	65	40	54	60	61	56			

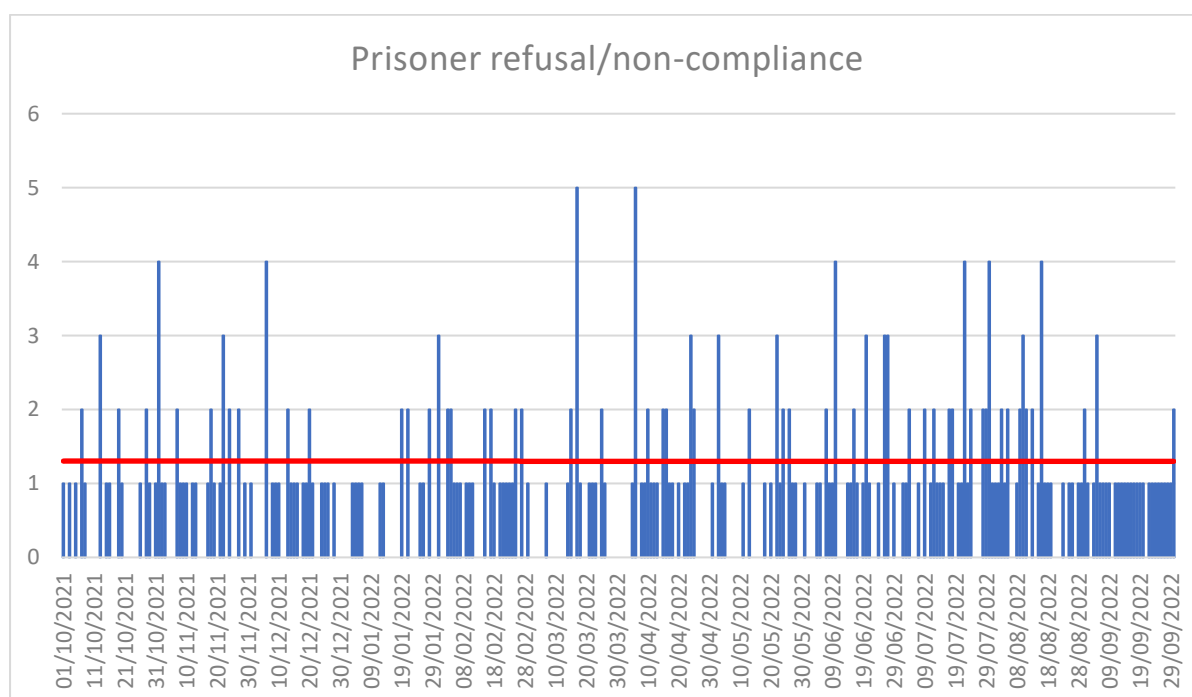
The level of use of force in respect of age, religion and ethnicity was proportionate to the population of the establishment. The increase in July, August and September was due to the number of incidents involving one prisoner, in segregation, who is awaiting alternative provision. No prisoners were injured during use of force incidents during the year. Five officers were slightly injured, but all were able to remain on duty.

There was no use of PAVA spray or special accommodation during the year. There was one use of a baton when a prisoner tried to assault with a weapon.

Completion of annexe As, to record incidents of use of force, improved steadily over the year with 100% being achieved in September 2022.

There was some increase in the use of body-worn cameras, but this is an area that needs to improve. The rollout of more reliable kit over the next year will assist, as will ongoing training and feedback from reviews of use of force incidents.

The Board is satisfied that the use of force is diligently monitored, and no incident viewed or reported has raised concern about the safe or humane treatment of the prisoners involved.

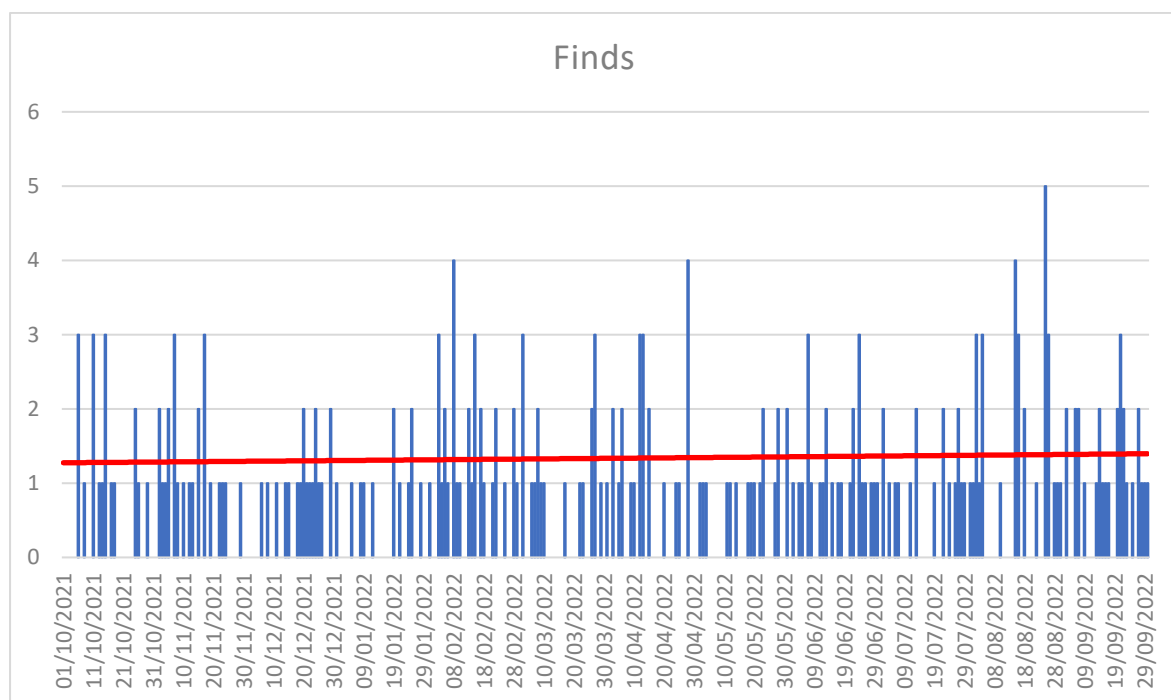


Reported incidents of prisoner refusal/non-compliance have remained stable throughout the year, as illustrated by the graph.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Measures to reduce illicit items reaching accommodation blocks were strengthened in that airport security-type screening was introduced at reception for staff and visitors. An external HMPPS security audit has mirrored Board concerns that body and clothing searches when the alarm is triggered are often not thoroughly conducted: a casual friendly approach is the norm. The Board would like to see bag scanners introduced at the reception, rather than a manual staff check. There are no checks made on staff or visitors leaving the prison, which could be a risk.

Body scanners for prisoners arriving at reception have led to a high number of finds, with men who will not admit to items secreted being housed in segregation to keep them apart from other prisoners. The Board reported that this was hampered when staff untrained in body scanning were deployed to reception to cover staff shortages; we were pleased to note that this was addressed.



There has been a consistent level of finds of illicit items throughout the year. Mandatory drug testing was reintroduced in the prison in September, following the establishment of a normal regime after Covid-19 restrictions were lifted in June and July.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The focus on cleanliness and hygiene now appears to be embedded in the operation of the prison, with accommodation invariably clean and tidy. Having said that, the age and condition of the building continues to present problems for both prisoners and staff.

Too frequent power cuts, floods, broken keys and other maintenance issues (gate failures etc) cause disruption and potential hazards to those living and working in the prison. Inadequate ventilation is an ongoing problem and led, despite the provision of fans for the most vulnerable prisoners, to people being accommodated in intolerable conditions during the summer heatwaves.

The sustained prioritisation of improving the decency of accommodation is welcomed. However, the default location of two prisoners in cells designed for one remains a concern, in terms of both dignity and the impact on discipline within the prison. The practice of prisoners having to eat in their cells (next to their toilet) persists. We do not believe that this situation is fit in any way for the 21st century.

During the year there was an attempt to adopt a more person-centred approach to bed management, taking care to match men who were required to share cells. The Governor reports that this has been successful, with a significant reduction in men refusing to share, which often leads to disruption, violence and removal to segregation. We do however retain a concern at the proportion of prisoners either housed in segregation or facing adjudications because of a refusal to share a cell. We are keen to see the reported progress continue.

We are aware that supplies of bedding and clothing are now, on the whole, effectively managed. We do know, however, of some delays during the year in the provision of basic supplies such as duvets and towels as well as toiletries and cleaning materials.

Despite the challenge presented by unfeasibly low budgets and stubbornly broken equipment in the kitchens, we note that the food provision has improved during the year. Food quantity, quality and choice are generally satisfactory and often good. Some issues of hygiene in the serveries persist but, in general, standards of food preparation and serving are satisfactory.

5.2 Segregation

The standard of physical conditions remained high, with further improvements to the fabric of the building. The unit is usually calm and well-controlled, with positive interactions observed between prisoners and staff. This is disturbed mainly when the unit is caring for men who have complex mental health and behavioural needs and are not awaiting more appropriate accommodation. Men receive daily visits from chaplaincy and a duty governor. The Board has not reinstated visits to all men in segregation following the Covid restrictions, due to a lack of Board numbers, but has

had a weekly presence in the unit and attended many good order or discipline (GOOD) boards.

We were pleased to observe that GOOD boards and reviews were conducted humanely and compassionately, encouraging the prisoner to contribute and express his views. Chairing governors and staff were seen to go the extra mile to resolve problems for prisoners, whether these were about the regime, their health, or their concerns about family outside the prison. We are keen to see more frequent attendance at GOOD reviews of staff with particular knowledge of the prisoner to allow an even more informed debate and a more tailored approach to the planning of the move out of segregation.

Prisoner C in the short observational study illustrates the actions of a not untypical prisoner that we meet in segregation. These actions resulted in him being segregated and remaining there for the majority of his time at HMP Hewell.

Meeting the mental health needs of men in segregation who are awaiting external specialist provision is a concern. There is effective liaison between mental health care and the segregation unit although at times delays in getting assessments completed, due to staff shortages. The Board has noted that segregation staff have to work hard to ensure that healthcare provides a suitably qualified nurse to assess fitness for segregation (completing the algorithm within two hours) and to attend GOOD boards. This appears to be due to the health team being overstretched rather than their attitude or commitment and may be a contractual issue.

Segregation staff who bear the brunt of mental health influenced behaviours are observed to be compassionate and understanding but frustrated. Caring for seriously mentally ill men, often needing restraint or three-person unlock, is draining on resources and morale.

The Board is pleased to note, at the end of its reporting year, that prisoners in segregation over 42 days will have specific care and management plans, devised by officers and the psychology team, with input from the neurodiversity officer. Also getting underway are reflective practice sessions for officers.

Adjudications are managed fairly and humanely and where observed the Board has no cause for concern.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key work

This was an area where the Governor and senior team hoped to make significant progress during the year, it was central to the cultural shift and change of ethos at the prison. The intention, working with Penal Reform Solutions using the Growth Project, was to adopt a more rehabilitative approach where the prisoner and his needs for moving forward in his life was at the centre of sentence planning. Each prisoner would have his own pathway plan, supported and managed by the prison offender manager (POM), key worker and other relevant parties, e.g. healthcare, substance misuse support, chaplaincy, education and vocational training.

Key work is the bedrock of the change. Despite staff training and allocation of men to officers, key work has not been embedded. Even cursory sessions are taking place less than 10% of the time and it is recognised that these are not of sufficient depth to

affect change. The main reason given is the staffing and having to move staff from house block to house block to provide cover, working against building positive ongoing relationships with the men. The Governor acknowledges that not all staff have yet embraced the new culture or seen its benefits; while this can be expected when implementing a major cultural change, the Board suggests that the time has come to be more challenging to those who are not on board with it.

Key work and improved staff and prisoner relationships can be evidenced in the Oak unit where there are just 15 men and a regular and consistent staff team who work to provide a therapeutic environment. There is evidence of it happening in the segregation unit, particularly with men who have mental health needs.

The Board has seen examples of very good relationships between individual staff and prisoners, again mainly in the specialist units. We see respectful relationships on all house blocks, and it is encouraging to note that assaults on staff are low. We have observed positive communication between senior managers and prisoners, and they are visible throughout the prison. Some prisoners report that they do not trust that requests for help and assistance are really listened to. They are processed, in the main efficiently, but too often there is a lack of a problem-solving or person-centred approach to resolving issues that the men raise. Responses to general prison applications and complaints reflect that prisoner concerns are too often escalated, rather than being addressed at source (see 5.7). This causes frustration for the men, often spilling over into disrespect for the officers and the regime and is contrary to the improvement in staff/prisoner relationships intended. We are pleased to note that some house blocks and some staff do demonstrate the desired approach and behaviours but do not think that it is close to a tipping point for this to be the norm.

It was also the intention to create more of a community throughout the prison, with prisoners being encouraged to take on roles within house blocks, in addition to any paid job roles. Correspondingly it had been intended that front-line officers and managers would be empowered to make changes and decisions on a daily basis that reflected the particular needs of their house block and population. Listeners and prisoner information desk workers, when given this autonomy with good support, have made a positive difference to the living experience of men on the house block and this recognises that prisoners are men with skills and abilities that they are usually keen to use. This empowering approach is not yet embedded across the prison.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The renewed focus on equality issues and the early signs of momentum that we noted in our last report receded during the year due to competing demands and staffing constraints. That said, significant progress and vigour at the end of the current reporting year signal much more effective attention to this area in the future. This recent progress includes the establishment of a number of prisoner forums and a distinctly more energetic approach from most of those charged with taking the lead on the various protected characteristics. The rest of this section of our report necessarily covers the year to September 2022 and cannot, except by way of optimistic allusion, cover more recent activity.

The Board has little evidence of direct discrimination of individuals covered by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act. We note that the general culture within the prison is one of tolerance and have evidence of individual incidents of compassion and kindness displayed by both staff and prisoners towards vulnerable people. That said, we remain seriously concerned that indirect unfairness is experienced by various groups and that the prison has demonstrated an insufficient appetite to understand or rectify the situation.

There has been some improvement in the data collected but it remains in many cases inconsistent, incomplete, late or irrelevant. Persistent trends (e.g. consistent over-representation of minority ethnic prisoners in adjudications) do not habitually get analysed but tend, rather, to be 'explained away' without an examination of possible assumptions or cultural factors manifesting in the data. We note that recent work in this area is actively seeking to remedy this complaint.

Facilities for prisoners who use wheelchairs or have other mobility limitations are deplorable. The prison currently has two adapted cells. Other individuals in this group are accommodated in non-adapted cells. The welcome installation of ramps to increase access to some areas at ground level does nothing to improve the lot of individuals who are stuck (with no lift) on upper floors. The consequences of these unsatisfactory arrangements include prisoners having no access to fresh air, no access to common areas, reliance on others to collect food, an inability to collect medication/get to healthcare and an inability to get to the library or the chapel. The safety consequences of this situation are obvious given that the prison only has two emergency evacuation chairs (only to get people downstairs in an emergency and only to be used by trained gym staff who are not always on-site). Bluntly, Hewell is not a safe or humane place to accommodate individuals with limited mobility.

We have consistently queried the impact of the separate (in both contractual and technical terms) systems operated by the prison, education and healthcare providers. In our view, this inevitably results in information which could inform the support provided to prisoners not being shared or acted on. On a related point we have a continuing concern at the apparent frequency with which widely acknowledged learning difficulties are undiagnosed or dealt with. We are hopeful that the newly established disability forum and the recent appointment of a neurodiversity support manager will go some way to shining a light on this area.

The Board remains concerned by the isolation and potential exclusion experienced by the large minority of prisoners who are foreign nationals (129 – 17% of the population in June) and the smaller but still significant number of prisoners with little or no English (36 in June). We have evidence of some cases of thoughtful intervention with such individuals, e.g. co-location with people of similar nationality/language (see Prisoner A in the short observational study) but there still appears to be no systemic support provided to such people. The reliance of the prison's systems on written communication still militates against those who are unable to read and write, as well as those for whom English is not their first language.

The unfeasibly low numbers of declared individuals falling within other potentially vulnerable cohorts remain a concern. As an example, in the middle of the year, out of a population of 886, three prisoners had declared themselves to be bisexual and eight to be gay. Of the remainder, 244 were recorded as 'not known' and 25 as 'prefer not to say'. Whether this apparent under-declaration was a result of insufficient trust in the system, insufficiently sensitive and/or effective enquiries being made or something else is not clear. What is clear is that the prison's data does not yet accurately reflect its population on a range of metrics.

We remain concerned at the impenetrability of the language used within the prison when communicating about equalities issues. The vocabulary used (even for prisoners who can read and understand English) is often unfamiliar to prisoners – they know what 'unfairness' is but not necessarily what 'discrimination' means. Even the notion of 'protected characteristics' is inaccessible – perhaps particularly to those vulnerable to abuse or discrimination. We are encouraged by the work just started to address language and presentational aspects of prison communication.

A large and growing minority of older prisoners do not yet have their specific needs either analysed or met. This includes screening and adaptations for those living with dementia. For such individuals, as well as those with neurodiversity issues, prison is a particularly challenging environment, and we see no evidence of these issues yet being addressed. Early work on addressing the particular needs of young adults is welcomed though we do not have much evidence yet of its impact. The separate accommodation of vulnerable prisoners tends to work well, and these individuals are, on the whole, treated with respect and dignity. We have evidence of isolated incidents of this cohort being subjected to abuse or intimidation when attending healthcare appointments or moving around the prison. We have seen no evidence that equalities issues raised via the complaints or adjudications systems are fed into the DIRF process within the prison or are used to inform the prison's work in this area. The unrealistically low level of DIRF complaints points to insufficient awareness and/or understanding of the process.

At the end of the reporting year, we are, once again, hopeful. The new appointment of a manager dedicated to this area, the use of specialist forums and the start of the long-awaited collaboration with the Zahid Mubarek Trust gives another opportunity for the prison to tackle equality and diversity issues with renewed rigour and effectiveness.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Hewell has broad chaplaincy provision, with a chapel, several multi-use rooms, a large chaplaincy office, two large rooms for Muslim prayer (with ablution facilities), and kitchen and toilet facilities. The chaplaincy at Hewell was one of the first prisons to be audited using a new HMPPS quality assurance and development process, the current managing chaplain having requested to take part.

Faith/belief: Provision for all faith groups is being met, and it was noted that prisoners of different faiths were treated equitably. There is good festival provision, including good liaison with the kitchen to ensure the appropriate dietary provision,

and clear information for prisoners and staff is available in several different languages. Regular meditation groups on special units (vulnerable prisoners, Oak unit and HB4) were reported to be much appreciated by prisoners. A prisoner focus group as part of the external audit reported a high level of satisfaction among prisoners with chaplaincy services and support.

The IMB was aware that vulnerable prisoners of the Christian faith were segregated for worship. The managing chaplain is aware that this is against accepted practice and needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

The chaplaincy team were commended by the quality assurance audit for exemplary care when there was a death of a prisoner or staff member and for bereaved prisoners and staff. Strengths noted include an effective rota to ensure that all men being admitted to the prison have access to a chaplain, and the Oak unit is visited every day. Distraction packs issued in conjunction with family support workers, who work out of the chaplaincy and were under the offender management unit during the reporting year, were reported to be highly regarded by prisoners. Areas for improvement include ensuring provision for religious practices on sentence plans and pathways and ensuring that general applications reach the chaplaincy in a timely manner. Chaplains visit all men in segregation and attend GOOD boards, and intend to reinstate the practice of seeing all men before release and attending pre-release planning meetings.

5.6 Incentives schemes

A new scheme was devised and implanted post-Covid but has not proved to be seen as incentivising by prisoners. The Governor reports that they are going back to the drawing board to look again, in particular at what would make enhancements meaningful in a prison where there is such a high percentage of men on remand, and not committed to the regime long term.

5.7 Complaints

In general, the number of complaints reduced compared with the previous year and the spread of locations remained roughly proportionate across the establishment. The reduction in the number of complaints appears, on the face of it, to be a good thing.

We remain concerned at the difficulties faced by prisoners with little or no English and those unable to read or write when trying to access the complaints system. An absence of complaints from these groups should not be taken as the absence of issues.

We observed an improvement in the general tone used in the replies to complaints compared with the previous year. Most use accurate spelling and grammar, use the prisoner's correct name and are signed by a named individual.

We note a disappointing number of complaints that were responded to outside the prescribed timescales – in December 2021, 67/203 were responded to late, and in January 2022 the figure was 31/199. This issue appears to have pertained

throughout the year with the equivalent figures in May being 32/139 and in June 19/96.

While in most cases the specifics of the complaint were dealt with in the reply, in too many cases the substance of the issue was not addressed. We are aware of some instances in which a prisoner was asked to prove the unprovable or in which a prisoner's version of events was dismissed out of hand.

A significant minority of complaints featured the 'discrimination box' being ticked (sometimes inappropriately) – 35/203 in December 2021, 23/199, in January and 13/140 in July. In almost none of these cases – nor in other instances in which unfairness was implicitly or explicitly raised in the complaint – were issues of equality/discrimination addressed in the reply.

Despite the welcome downward trend in the number of complaints, we remain concerned at the stubborn frequency of issues being raised via the complaints system that could reasonably have been resolved on the house blocks. This trend is borne out by our observations of prisoners being routinely advised to 'put in a complaint' when even the most routine questions are asked. The complaints system appears to be used too often as a solution of first resort rather than last resort by both prisoners and staff and should not be used as a proxy for good management. This situation creates negativity within the prison and is also a drain of time and resources.

We have some evidence of a lack of faith in the complaints system on the part of prisoners. Whether this is the result of frustration or a lack of understanding of the system is unclear. Many complaints still reflect prisoners' frustration at the lack of autonomy in the regime

5.8 Property

Before the introduction of the revised protocol for dealing with property issues within the Prison Service, we noted a worrying increase in the proportion of complaints referencing property issues. In January 30/199 complaints were about property, in February the figures were 39/153 and in March the figures were 41/110. We look forward to seeing the impact of the new policy in this regard.

The Board has been made aware of property concerns, often when men are moved cells within the prison and their property does not follow in a timely fashion. There have been some incidents of property going missing en route, but it has not been a major concern over the year. It has recently come to light that a new system for incoming property/parcels has led to some goods being rejected on delivery. We have recently become aware of the impact of the practices of other establishments and escorting contractors in allowing the prison to implement the newly introduced protocols around volumetric control of property. This is an area we will continue to monitor.

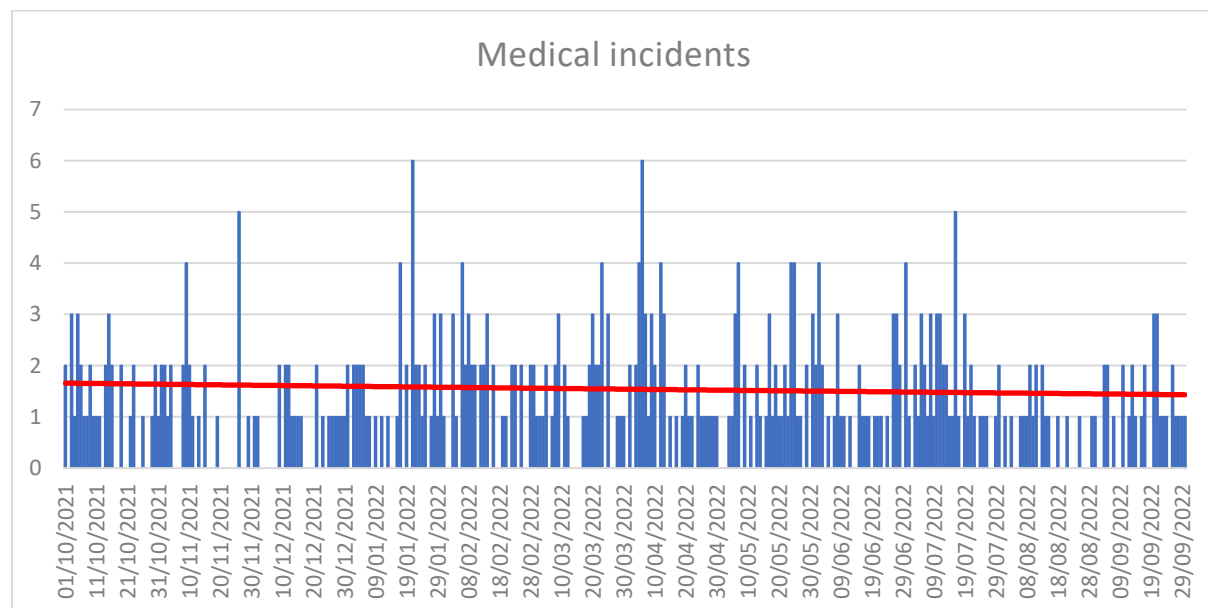
The Board is concerned that failure to deal promptly with prisoners' concerns about property is indicative of an attitude among some staff that it does not matter, or it is a nuisance and a distraction to the daily routine. This suggests a failure to recognise

the importance of personal belongings to prisoners and the impact of losing them; it does not evidence the desired level of humane treatment. It also adds to prisoner frustrations and feelings of being let down, which in turn reduces their commitment to the regime and to building relationships with officers.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The Board acknowledges that it lacked the necessary resources to undertake detailed monitoring of healthcare in the past year. The ability of medical staff to provide a healthcare service comparable to that provided in the community is compromised on an almost daily basis by incidents recorded on the daily brief as being medical in origin. The following graph illustrates that there was on average one incident each day, with two days when there were six. Each of these incidents take medical staff from their routine work to respond to the incident.



Source: HMP Hewell daily handover reports

6.2 Physical healthcare

The Board noted an improvement in the provision of physical healthcare. Waiting times for a general GP appointment were reported to be 2–3 weeks and for dental appointments 6–8 weeks, which is comparable with the community outside the prison.

Concerns earlier in the year about the dispensing of medication have decreased as changes to the regime allowed more time without interrupting men getting to work or education.

Integration of healthcare within the reception and induction area has improved assessment and continuity of care where required.

Night-time staffing/healthcare provision continues to be a concern. On more than one occasion a healthcare assistant was the only one on duty and was not qualified to stand down a code (meaning that it had been flagged that a prisoner needed urgent medical attention but later turned out not to). At other times there was no one qualified to authorise prescriptions overnight. Unsurprisingly the call out for ambulances was high: seven in one week alone during September. Men having to

go to external hospitals ties up ambulances and prison staff; this reduces capacity at the prison and also in an already overstretched ambulance service.

A health and wellbeing group meets monthly and has been observed by the Board. This proactively addresses an action plan for health improvements.

6.3 Mental health

The Board was pleased to see the Oak unit opened and operational. This is a unit for up to 15 men with complex mental health and behavioural needs. The unit has benefited from a consistent and committed staff team and well-appointed and equipped accommodation. It has achieved its ambition to be a therapeutic community where group and individual therapies are provided. There have been many notable successes through this unit during the first year of operation.

One of the men who has benefited from this unit is prisoner Z who has been in prison for 14 years and for much of that time found it difficult to engage with the regime on the normal house blocks, and who spent several periods in the Segregation unit, often troubled and angry and requiring several staff to restrain him.

After six months in the Oak unit, Mr Z is now taking his medication, and has engaged in education and exercise, and several therapeutic activities. He is awaiting the outcome of a parole hearing and has been successful in his parole application. His day-to-day life in prison is now purposeful to his own benefit. He works with the regime and where possible supports other men.

When asked what made the difference Mr Z put it down to the following things:

- smaller number of prisoners sharing a better physical space where they have an exercise area, games area, sensory room to chill out in, craft room, single cells
- consistent small staff team who really get to know the men and help them face up to their issues; it is personal
- space to think and to be alone
- a sense of community when you want to join in with group activities
- getting away from the pressure to get involved in trouble on the house blocks

When asked what would make it better, Mr Z said more group work sessions, more activities and more education.

When asked if there was a danger that men would not be able to resettle on a normal house block after a period in the Oak unit, Mr Z said that it depended on the man. For himself, he was confident that he would not go backwards and would be better able to relate to other people, having restored faith in people while in the unit. He thought some men might find it difficult to adjust to the numbers and pressures of a large house block.

The Board is concerned that beds in this unit (three at the year-end) are used to house prisoners who have disability/accessibility needs and benefit from the larger

cells in the unit. The prison is converting two cells on a house block for such needs, but the provision remains below that required. The Board urges prison managers to reduce the use of the Oak unit for this purpose while recognising they have no control over who is sent to Hewell.

The target for hospital transfers for prisoners requiring a secure hospital, or another specialist mental health resource, is 28 days; one man was waiting 145 days before successful transfer, despite the collaborative approach within the prison health and prison staff. A negative loop has been observed: men are not fit for court so cannot be sentenced, until sentenced they cannot be considered for the specialist provision, until they get specialist mental health input, they will not become fit for court.

Four vacancies in the mental health team at the end of the reporting period meant that it was usually 21 days from referral to a psychology review. It also meant that having a proactive mental health presence on the early days unit (HB2) was not possible.

6.4 Social care

Some external social care provision is provided in a timely manner, but the response to urgent referrals is often lacking. Work is ongoing to resolve this with Worcestershire County Council, including safeguarding staff. When manual handling is required, the physical limitations of some cells make safe caring difficult. Hewell has just two cells adapted for men with disability/ accessibility needs, with two more being created, which is still woefully inadequate. The appointment of a neurodiversity officer is starting to impact on assessments and recognition of needs that can be included in pathway plans for individual men.

There has been successful implementation of social care peers on HB6, which are paid prison jobs for prisoners. It is intended to roll this out across the prison. The scheme is working well, with positive feedback from service users. Carers assist those with physical restrictions to access the shower, help to clean their cell, collect food, take them to healthcare appointments and be a supportive ear. Though welcome and conducive to building a caring community this provision is no substitute for access to specialist social care.

The prison is not equipped to deal with a range of conditions including bariatric care and men who need manual handling to move them. Space for two carers to lift and move a man is very limited, which compromises safety and dignity. One sentenced prisoner who required a hoist to have his basic needs met had to remain in a nursing home, with prison officer staff in attendance. This is a resource and a security issue and is reflective of the policy to place men in local prisons, even when they do not have adequate accommodation. We have reported elsewhere on the lack of provision for men who have accessibility/mobility needs.

6.5 Exercise, and regime

The gym timetable shows that it is operating to full capacity and that it is a well-managed operation which is respected by prisoners, resulting in no incidents or violence. The Board has not investigated how the men are allocated to sessions, how many do not get their allocation, or what part this plays in the incentives scheme for sentenced and remanded prisoners.

The Board is aware that it has not been able to talk openly with prisoners to get their views on the post-lockdown regime or hear about their first-hand experience of what is on offer to them. The Board was aware that while time out of cell was increasing, little was on offer by way of activity; there was evidence of managers encouraging and providing resources for house block staff to set up such activities.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

This has not been an area that the Board has had resources to monitor during the year. We are aware that there are Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and other group work sessions for those with drug addictions. Listeners play a part in supporting men who are withdrawing from addictions, and there was good support for the Listeners from prison staff

6.7 Soft skills

The Board noted a number of events and initiatives over the year including powerlifting competitions, basketball challenges and a summer triathlon (rowing machine, cycling machine, running). There was a charity fundraising rowing competition. Through the library men from Hewell took part in an international chess competition, all the way to the final. New board games were provided for all house blocks and staff were encouraged to set up a range of groups and activities, such as book clubs, or poetry sessions. The Board has not had the resources to observe or to provide an informed view of how well this initiative has been received.

The Board is aware of several healthy lifestyle and parenting courses taking place, but again has not had the resources to monitor or provide an informed view.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Activities and library

We have seen increased efforts to provide prisoners with meaningful education, vocational training and employment, but the Board has insufficient evidence this year, due to our resource limitations, to make a substantive comment on its reach and appropriateness.

Persistent delays to the provision of work and education opportunities for vulnerable prisoners remain a concern.

The library is potentially a valuable resource for prisoners and not only as a source of reading material. The expertise and commitment of its staff, both professionals and orderlies, attract users seeking advice or information not readily available on their house block. This makes it all the more important that men from every residential area can use the weekly opportunities allocated to their particular unit. In most cases, the liaison between library and house blocks routinely provides those opportunities, but there are recurring exceptions. Of particular note is the support of library staff to men who play chess, getting them all the way to the international championship, representing the UK.

Midway through the reporting year the prison introduced an ambitious scheme which aimed to give direction and purpose to the activities of every convicted prisoner during his time in custody. Included within his induction was to be an individual assessment of need and, with the outcome of this in mind, assignment to a programme – or pathway – offering the most relevant opportunities. The rollout of this pathway approach to individualised planning remains central to the prison's ethos though we note that its implementation has been hampered by several issues including staffing constraints.

The ambition and rationale of this scheme is warmly welcomed. What has yet to be established is its practicality in the face of the operational realities which confront any such innovation. Two examples of these illustrate why the Board tempers its admiration of the concept with a degree of practical caution.

Example 1: Later in the year the house block dedicated to induction was found to have up to 70 men who had completed their initial programme, been assigned to any relevant pathway, but were unable to move on to their new location. They were, in effect, queuing for a vacant bed in a suitable house block. As this report was being prepared that queue had shortened, but there were still over 50 men waiting to move on. This loss of purpose and momentum at the beginning of their time in custody is very regrettable.

Example 2: The Board has also been dismayed to observe the situation in the glazing workshop. For several months there has been very little work for the unit to do – and frequently none at all. Prisoners continue to attend, but they spend their days in desultory activities which do nothing more than pass the time.

It is practicalities such as these which have to be addressed if the new scheme is to yield its potential.

We do not know the proportion of men who are employed off the house block or engaged in training activities.

7.2 Offender management, progression

Category D prisoners

The role of HMP Hewell, a closed prison, nevertheless includes a number of men who have been assessed as suitable for open conditions. The number of these men, who are in category D, was sampled by the Board on four occasions during the year. It is inevitable that the processes of organising a suitable open place and arranging transport mean that a handful of such prisoners – typically five or six – are being held while their transfers are being negotiated. Only in one instance did the speed of these negotiations concern the Board. This involved a man who, despite his re-categorisation, had circumstances which made a transfer very difficult. He remained in closed conditions for fully six months after being made category D. Additionally, the prison has held men who had been category D on release, but subsequently recalled following a breach of licence. The Board accepted they must necessarily be held in closed conditions pending a review of categorisation.

IPP prisoners

In its 2021 report, the Board described the troubling number of men who were still serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences. At that time there were 29 of them in total, six of whom had been in custody since their conviction and 23 of whom had been recalled after breaching the conditions of their licences.

In 2022 it is good to be able to report that each of these categories has been somewhat reduced in the course of the year. There is now a total of 19 IPP prisoners, four of whom have been in custody since their conviction. The remaining 15 have been recalled after breaching their licences.

Despite this improvement, the situation of those IPP prisoners who remain in custody, fully 10 years after the sentence was abolished, has to be reported as a matter of concern.

Remand prisoners

The Board has monitored the length of time for which prisoners are being held on remand. The roll was examined in late March, around the mid-point of the reporting year and again in September, close to its end. The results are summarised as percentages, with actual numbers in brackets.

	March 2022	September 2022
% of total roll being held on remand	47 (374)	46 (402)
% of remands already held over six months	12 (46)	3 (13)

% of remands already held between three and six months	22 (84)	15 (62)
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The Board is pleased to note the progress that has been made during this six-month period. Nevertheless, it remains a concern that there are 75 men currently on remand who have already been held for over three months. The size of this number, some 8.5% of the prison's total roll, underlines the importance of the custodial experience provided to unconvicted men at HMP Hewell.

The data for the entire prison estate – used by the Prison Reform Trust in the current Bromley Report – reveals a particularly high rate of self-harm among prisoners on remand. It is therefore commendable that HMP Hewell assigns a POM to men on remand if the induction process suggests that they are vulnerable.

The Board is less reassured, however, by the appropriateness of the disclaimer which remanded prisoners are invited to sign on reception. This is taken to renounce their entitlement to be assigned cellmates who, like them, are unconvicted. Even if the validity of this process were to be endorsed, the IMB would hope to see new prisoners more carefully briefed about the implications of what they were signing. The allowance of social visits to men on remand is also a concern. The Board's reading of PSI 16/2011, last revised in October 2021, is that these prisoners have an entitlement to at least three visits each week. Their current allowance falls far short of that.

The length of some periods spent on remand makes it all the more desirable that these men are encouraged to put their time in custody to constructive use. It was therefore commendable to find, when the situation was sampled at the year's end, that 70 remand prisoners had chosen to be involved in work, education or the wellbeing pathway. The Board hopes to see this figure rise during the coming year.

Facilities do not allow the separation of remanded and sentenced prisoners. Men on remand do not get their full visiting rights, or to wear their own clothing; providing equitable but meaningful and consistent rehabilitation opportunities is a challenge.

7.3 Family contact

While family contact is cited as important in the prison, we do not see it being the 'golden thread' mentioned in the Farmer Review. Important work is being done in this area, but it does not appear to be fully embedded into or universally prioritised in the operation of the prison.

The impact of the teams involved in this work at Hewell is remarkable and often unsung. The range of projects and initiatives (which are recorded elsewhere and not listed here) and their reach within the prison is extensive. The work is painstaking, innovative, very often challenging and sometimes distressing. To see prisoners visibly relax when they meet their families on a family day or to hear two prisoners gently talking together about their shared experiences of parenthood manifests a lot of patient work beforehand. The impact of engagement with the wider community about the effect of prison on family life is hard to quantify, but important.

Our sense is that the value of this work is not universally appreciated across the whole prison. With notable exceptions, many prison staff appear to regard this area of work as marginal to the prisoners' experience and as an added extra. This is evidenced in part by the lack of facilities provided in terms of office accommodation, staffing for family days, supplies for activities etc. The demand for this support for prisoners and families is extensive and growing, and meeting it appears currently to be limited by a lack of space, time, and resources (very small things, e.g. a supply of card, make a massive difference – it is not unusual for volunteers to provide such materials), and consistent cooperation within the prison.

The contractual structure of the provision – with a number of different external agencies involved in delivering the service – appears to militate against a seamless approach to the work. It is to the credit of the individuals working in this area that this artificially disjointed approach (against the background of the constant pressure to seek contract renewal and funding) works as well as it does and that the prisoners do not see the challenges being faced.

The condition of the visitors' reception centre remains a concern. As the first port of call for all visitors to the prison, the outside of the building and the approaches to it do not provide a warm welcome. Once visitors are inside the centre the reception is friendly and helpful but that does not counteract the rather forbidding and scruffy exterior. We were shocked to learn that the centre had not been covered by a cleaning contract for several months, leaving centre staff to provide basic cleaning services. Thankfully the situation has now been rectified.

The main visits hall remains a warm and welcoming place for visitors and prisoners. The presence of play and family engagement workers both in the hall and at the visitors' reception centre is valuable and reassuring. The processes of booking and finding accurate information about visiting the prison remain rather hard to navigate.

We are concerned that the allocation of social visits for prisoners has not returned after Covid restrictions to their full entitlement. The provision of social video calls acts as another channel of communication to maintain family ties and suits some families but does not, for many prisoners, replace the importance of face-to-face contact. Reduced visits sessions are a concern. The restricted number of visits is a particular issue for remand and enhanced prisoners whose access to visits appears to fall short of their entitlement.

The universal provision of in-cell telephones has changed the landscape in allowing prisoners to maintain contact with their loved ones. One man told us of the importance to him and his sons of him being able to ring them at bedtime to say goodnight rather than at 'four o'clock with the whole landing listening'. The clumsy introduction of a new phone system which included recorded messages identifying callers as ringing from a prison caused distress to both prisoners and their families. The system was changed after protests, but the lack of imagination and insight which resulted in the misjudgement was unfortunate.

In summary, the Board feels that vital and effective work in the area of family contact is being done in trying circumstances in, but not really by, the prison. We would like

to see increased prioritisation of this area. Increased focus and resourcing would enhance the welfare of the prisoners, mitigate the impact of issues around family life on discipline, and, maybe, self-harm and give families the best chance of staying together. These objectives would seem to be both humane and, in the longer term, an essential element in seeking to reduce reoffending. What happens to prisoners affects families and what happens to families affects prisoners.

7.4 Resettlement planning

We acknowledge that the Board has had limited resources to monitor this area fully during the year.

We are yet to be persuaded of the efficacy of the prison system in preparing prisoners for release, though acknowledge that there are many other agencies and societal issues involved in this area. It is a particular challenge in a local prison with a high number of men on remand, short sentences and significant churn. The Hewell focus on pathway planning and key work is a step in the right direction to effective resettlement and we are aware of hardworking staff who work to link prisoners to job roles and are encouraging links with local employers. We are also aware of efforts to support prisoners on release with housing, though have testimony from prisoners that this issue is a real concern to them and a potential barrier to them remaining out of custody. The Board cannot confirm the number of prisoners released NFA,

A CV writing service is operated by peers in the library to help assist in constructing CVs and also bridging the gap with employers so that prisoners have a job to go to on leaving prison.

In summary, the Board, in keeping with other IMBs, concludes that re-settlement planning is more rhetoric than reality in category B local prisons.

The work of the IMB

This has been the sixth consecutive challenging year for the Board which has, at times, been on the verge of non-sustainability because of the pressure on members. While the impact of Covid-19 was the single most dominant force affecting the Board, other challenges also presented significant difficulties. Members' personal circumstances meant that at no time during the year were all members able to attend the prison. However, we did manage to have a physical presence in the prison every month. The challenge of operating a mixture of in-person and remote monitoring cannot be overstated.

Many of our experienced members have health or age-related restrictions on their availability and capacity. These challenges persisted and with the lifting of Covid restrictions, three members took sabbatical leave.

Two members resigned during the second month of the reporting year. Two members were recruited during the year. Two members have told us that they will resign before the end of the calendar year.

The Board can confirm that it has fulfilled the statutory duty of visiting all parts of the prison during the year.

The Board continues to enjoy constructive and professional relationships with the senior management and staff in the prison. During the year we have been afforded access to prison meetings and documents which have both informed and improved our ability to monitor the prison. The prison has shared this information with the Board in a constructive spirit.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period (active)	11 (7)
Total number of visits to the establishment	248
Total number of interactions with the establishment that resulted in an issue being raised on a rota report (including physical visits)	399
Total number of segregation reviews attended (+virtual attendance)	48 (+15)

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	15	21
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	9	1
C	Equality	7	6
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	17
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	9	26
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	9	13
F	Food and kitchens	24	32
G	Health, including physical, mental, and social care	53	42
H1	Property within this establishment	16	31
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	7	17
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	8	14
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	12	22
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	66	65
K	Transfers	3	6
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	23	25
	Covid-19	4	0
	Total number of applications	270	338

Appendix

Short observational study

In order to better understand the lived experience of prisoners newly arrived, Board members followed three prisoners who arrived from Coventry magistrates court in June 2022. All were processed through reception and moved to the induction wing. None of the prisoners contacted the IMB via an application.

Although the study was intended to follow prisoners chosen at random, so as not only to speak to prisoners who sought out the Board to complain, but also those who 'just got on with their time in prison', we also hoped to discover if what prisoners were told in reception and on the induction wing helped with their settling down in prison. The three chosen prisoners proved to be more challenging than the average prisoner. As such they consumed a large number of resources to keep them safe and deal with them humanely. They have given us evidence for parts of the report.

Prisoner A

Rota report re Reception Day 0

'One new arrival claimed to have limited English and it was arranged for the Listener, who spoke his language, to spend time talking to him. The SO and CM were concerned about this person due to the nature of his offence and lack of English'.

Day 9

Prisoner A is a foreign national.

I visited Mr A - still on Induction Wing - and spoke to an Officer who seemed to know him well. The Officer told me that he had been fairly argumentative, demanding instant answers and 'over keen' to use the cell bell on arrival but, since his move to share a cell, had apparently calmed down. The Officer told me that he appeared to have sufficient understanding of/proficiency in English to get by but that he resorted to claiming a lack of English when met with an answer that did not suit him.

I spoke to Mr A in his cell. He appeared calm and well. He told me that he was frustrated at delays in clearing money on his account, but the Officer told me that the senders were still being checked by Security. I advised him to be patient and reassured him that some processes took a while to sort out. He alluded to needing special food and said that he needed to talk to his solicitor. He was polite. His English, though not fluent, was adequate for the conversation I had with him though I would suggest that it would not be sufficient for more involved discussions.

Day 92

Mr A had just been moved so he could share a cell with a fellow countryman. He was settling in.

Prisoner B

Daily brief Day 2

'S/O received information that Mr B on an open ACCT was threatening to self-harm. S/O attended his cell and found Mr B tightening a shoelace around his neck.

The item was removed, and an ACCT review was completed.

Mr B confirmed he had issues with not being able to contact his mother, her number was added to his contact list, and he was taken to healthcare for a health check and then returned to his cell location'.

Daily brief Day 7

'Staff reported that Mr B pressed his cell bell upon answering it they noticed that he had self-harmed by cutting his left wrist due family issues in the community causing him stress. He was taken to the nurses on house block 2 who cleaned and dressed his wounds. A F213SH was completed his c-nomis updated and also an entry in the obs book and an I.R. ACCT re-opened.

Day 9

By this time Mr B had been moved to the vulnerable prisoners unit.

I spoke to Officer about Mr B and was told that he was still on an ACCT with hourly observations. I was told that he was ok and engaging with staff and accessing the regime. Officer Ali told me that Mr B had settled since arriving from Induction.

I did not seek to talk to Mr B in person as the HB was getting ready for lunch.

Daily brief Day 14

'15.00hrs. Mr B put on his cell call and stated to staff he had cut his arm in frustration about not being able to see his children. He was taken to Outpatients to be treated and his ACCT re-opened from post-closure.

Daily brief Day 15

'It was reported that Mr B was low in mood and in an emotional state. It was also reported that he had made a ligature by his cellmate. He also had a piece of broken glass but had not harmed himself. He was seen by the unit SO and an ACCT review completed. Observations upped to 4 per hour'.

Day 24

I walked to the gatehouse with Staff from Children and Families team. One had been on the phone to Mr B in his cell talking about activities to keep in touch with his children when he told her that he was making a ligature. She kept him talking and got her manager's attention who then alerted staff who went to his door. Account given in daily brief: *'During a welfare check on Mr B he had a self-tightening ligature positioned around his neck. Officers began speaking to Mr B and attempted to reason with him to hand the ligature over. Mr B said he would not, and officer used his fish knife to remove the ligature from his neck. ACCT review carried out.'*

Daily brief Day 34

'Code red called as Mr B had made several superficial cuts to his left forearm. He was willing to talk through his issues which were mainly anxiety re. forthcoming court appearance tomorrow. He settled and his wounds were cleaned, and he was given some dressings by our responding Paramedic. Post closure ACCT re-opened with new Concern Form completed.'

'Code red following further self-harm from Mr B. Dressed By hotel 3 and Code stood down. He requested listeners which was facilitated. All were secure and back behind doors for 22:25. The listeners raised concerns regarding Mr B's intentions once his cellmate was asleep, due to this and his court appearance his observations were increased to 3 per hour. He is due in court.'

Daily brief Day 35

'18:50 – Mr B asked for the listeners, and this was facilitated. Door secured at 19:45'

Daily brief Day 37

5 obs per hour

'Staff reported that when unlocking Mr B for his meal in cell he ran down the landing and tied a ligature off the bars, staff intervened very quickly and cut him down. He was escorted to the unit Office where he was spoken to by Oscar 1, Mr B stated his reasons were because he had been given 2 extra charges at court and he couldn't take this anymore. The Duty Governor was informed, and he was escorted into the constant watch cell. He was seen by healthcare. ACCT reviewed at 14.00 and constant watch lowered to x5 obs per hour. Mr B was escorted back to cell'.

Daily brief day 38 1307

5 obs per hour

'22.00hrs- HB6, A1-04 – Mr B requested to speak to the listeners. He was escorted to the Crisis Suite with the Listeners and returned to his own cell at 22.40hrs. He is presently on an ACCT form on 5 obs per hour'

Daily brief day 39 to 49

5 obs per hour

Daily brief day 41

'22.45hrs- Mr B requested to speak to the Listeners. He went into the Crisis Suite with the listeners and returned to his own cell at 00.15hrs. He is currently on an ACCT with observations 5 times per hour. he was grateful to the listeners for helping to support him.'

Daily brief day 49

'22:55 – Mr B, requested Listeners as anxious about tomorrow's court appearance. Request facilitated'.

Daily brief day 50

'15:30 hrs- Mr B self-harmed when he was at court in the holding cells, an ACCT review was completed by S/O on his return to the establishment, he confirmed he was upset as he believed he would be moving from court to HMP Birmingham'.

Daily brief day 63

'21:30hrs – HB6 A1-04 Mr B requested the Listeners. This was facilitated. All prisoners secured back in cell at 22:10hrs.

Day 72

I spent a long time talking to Mr B on the exercise yard. He is now sentenced and has a job on the wing. He is hoping to complete his sentence at Hewell. He was in a positive frame of mind and though he had self-harmed (he showed me the cuts on his arm) he is not now and does not feel the need to. He is keen to maintain contact with his children some adopted/fostered, some with their mother. He is discussing with the family's team how to progress maintaining contact with all his children. He is looking forward to his release in about 12 months and is realistic about his chances of getting the work he would like to do .

Prisoner C

Daily brief Day 2

'On the 08/06/2022 at approx. 20:40 hours Mr C was informed that he would not be receiving night-time medication as he was not prescribed anything. Mr C then smashed the tv, kettle and tipped over the cupboards in the cell. Cell mate removed from the cell for his safety.

Mr C informed he would be placed on report for damaging prison property.'

Daily brief Day 4 1006

'Governor, at approx 09:30 while doing medication for Mr C as I unlocked him he ran from the door and sprinted up the stairs thinking he was attempting to access the bars I chased after him and he stopped at a door and looked inside, I challenged him on this which he took exception to and started making thinly veiled threats towards me I challenged him on this again, this continued to the medication hatch where he stated he could "knock me out in one". A protective strike was used to the face and Mr C was restrained until more staff responded, Mr C was helped to his feet and walked back to his cell'.

Daily brief Day 6

'Mr X challenged Mr C on sterile area because he had kept him awake all night shouting out of his window, Mr C then punched Mr X in the face, both men started fighting Officer intervened and stopped the fight, both men refused to see healthcare stating they had no issues, both men were placed on report'.

'Mr C smashed the electrical items and his cupboard in his cell, he was frustrated and angry about the fight he was involved in earlier and his medication, he was placed on report, He made further threats to damage property, Governor met with him to discuss his actions he was then relocated to segregation pending adjudication'.

Seg roll Day 7

Mr C is shown on the Seg roll under 53/4 for damage to prison property.

Day 9

I went to speak to Mr C and was told of his location in Seg. Staff told me that he had been a difficult prisoner.

Day 24

Mr C refused to attend his GOOD Board. Reportedly exhibiting some bizarre behaviour. Gov to see him on her rounds. Signed up in Seg.'

Daily brief Day 29

'Mr C had completed his exercise and came off the yard onto the ground floor in the segregation unit, he headbutted officer under the right eye causing bruising to his face , Control and Restraint was initiated and Mr C was relocated back to his cell with no injuries reported, Paramedic completed an F213, Officer was checked by medial staff and offered staff care and welfare , he carried on doing his duties and reported the incident and injury in the accident book'.

Good Board Day 38

'Due to be released tomorrow. Chose not to attend. "Wants to ride it out" in Seg.'

Day 42

Mr C has been released



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