Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at
HMP Brixton

for reporting year
1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody
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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 or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

(1) 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.

(2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.

(3) 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.
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

2.1 During the year under review, HMP Brixton changed its profile. Initially, it held category C and D prisoners, focusing on training and resettlement. From the beginning of 2017, the prison transferred the majority of its category D prisoners. C wing, with better facilities, was used for full time workers and enhanced prisoners instead. Sex offenders were accommodated on G wing. D wing remained a drug recovery unit, and A and B wings were general population. Part of A wing was used for the London Pathway Unit, for up to 36 prisoners committing to psychological therapies. Brixton continued to be a resettlement prison. Certified accommodation was 528, operational capacity remained 810.

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2.2 The Segregation Unit has 7 cells, and one special cell (doubling as a holding cell). Material changes to other areas of the prison were largely cosmetic. Overall, the condition of the accommodation remained unacceptable.
3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

3.1 This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Brixton for the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017. IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

Main Judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

3.2 The prison has suffered from severe staffing shortages for most of this reporting year. By August, although the staffing complement was nearer to the establishment figure than at any time earlier, 38% of the staff in post were new entrants. They could not be expected to undertake the full range of duties with the confidence and competence of experienced officers. The lack of staff has negatively affected every aspect of the prison. (4.4; 4.5; 4.13; 4.18-4.19; 5.1; 5.15; 6.1; 7.1; 7.2; 7.7; 8.5; 9.4; 9.4) 11.4)

3.3 As the prison became safer and more stable, with a more consistent regime, the treatment of prisoners became less unfair. They could more often expect to get time out of cell for activities, showers and phone calls, and to get it at the regular times. A more organised approach was taken to reducing violence and bullying. Even by the end of the reporting year, however, conditions in Brixton were below standard. Many of the key points identified by HMIP in January 2017 were being addressed; but the improvements were still work in progress. A regime facilitating more fully the role of a resettlement prison, which ceased in July 2016 after months of inconsistent adherence to it, will not be restored until January 2018 at the earliest.

3.4 The Board acknowledges the amount of change the Governor and his staff have brought about: Brixton was a much safer prison in August than it was in January. It considers that the distance Brixton still has to go towards an acceptable resettlement regime demonstrates what a difficult and slow process it is to turn round a prison that has been under-staffed to fail. The Board also recognises that many officers and staff at all levels, including in agencies, have consistently treated prisoners as fairly and compassionately as they could.

3.5 Throughout the year, the proportion of men on basic IEP has exceeded the national average. The basic regime has not been enforced, men have not been encouraged to get off basic, and they have been kept on it for too long, with reduced visits. (5.13 - 5.15)

3.6 The sanction of closed visits has been used as an automatic response to the failure of a Mandatory Drug Test (MDT) and, for most of the year, for a minimum of three months, whether or not there was evidence of the individual being involved in importing drugs into the prison during visits. This was contrary to a PPO recommendation, and to the conclusions of the Farmer report on the importance of family ties. (5.17- 5.18)
3.7 The determination of appeals against adjudication findings was delayed for months because of administrative mistakes. This is a failure in basic fairness. (5.19)

**Are prisoners treated humanely?**

3.8 The poor standard of accommodation in Brixton and its inadequate staffing made humane treatment impossible to achieve. There was restricted access to activities, medical and other appointments, for instance with the CRC pre-release; and sentence planning fell below adequate standards. (4.5; 5.1; 6.1; 7.1-7.2; 7.7; 8.5; 9.3-9.4; 11.3-11.4; 11.7)

3.9 For older men, around 70 of them once G wing was re-rolled for sex offenders, accommodation in small shared cells with bunk beds, on the first floor, was particularly unsuitable. (3.9; 5.2)

3.10 On the main wings, men were not protected from the availability of drugs and the associated violence, debt and, for PS (psychoactive substances), the danger of psychotic episodes. Some men continued to self-segregate from fear of retribution over debts. They and their relatives were coerced into paying the dealers. (4.7-4.15)

3.11 The mental health team was over-stretched, and there were few adequate facilities for mental health consultations. (6.2; 8.9-8.14)

**Are prisoners prepared well for release?**

3.12 The relatively few prisoners who were working full-time and gaining work qualifications were well served, and good jobs were available on release. For the majority of men, the restricted regime meant that they spent too long in their cells to be adequately prepared for release. They were not accustomed to a regular pattern of work, and their progress towards qualifications or skills was interrupted by lockdowns. (9.2-9.4, 10.2)

3.13 In January, the wing for D category men eligible for day release for work (ROTL) was closed. This removed good resettlement opportunities, with a network of employers built up over several years. The Board regrets that loss, which did not achieve a lasting reduction in the amount of drugs trafficked into the prison. The prison made every effort to find prison places from which the Cat D men still on ROTL could continue their jobs.

3.14 The prison population pressures which led to the closure of the category D wing also brought 240 sex-offenders to Brixton. Some of these men were from outside the prison’s catchment area, and needed to complete courses not provided in Brixton. Moving bodies to available beds without consideration for their needs is not consistent with resettlement objectives, or with humanity. (5.3)

3.15 As population pressures changed again, it became difficult to find places for men who achieved Category D while in Brixton. By the end of the year there were 32 Cat Ds, some of whom had been waiting four months for a transfer to a prison that would improve their resettlement options.

3.16 Men who needed housing on release, including in approved premises, were not well served because of the shortages of such accommodation in London. The least
unfortunate got something temporary, a few nights or a week. Others went out with nowhere to go. Release for men going to approved premises was often delayed. (A.7-A.10)

3.17 Good work was done by the prison and by PACT to maintain family relationships. However, for most of the year the high use of basic IEP, which limits visits, and the use of closed visits as a penalty for drug test failure ran counter to these efforts. Only at the end of the reporting year was there some mitigation of the closed visit penalty. The transfer of first tranches of sex offenders to G wing in February also removed some men far from their visitors. (5.3; 5.16-5.18)

3.18 An unfortunate effect of the necessary focus on restoring safety and order was that a high number of additional days, almost 18 years in total, was added to men’s sentences. This was almost two and a half times higher in the calendar year 2016 than in 2015, against an average increase across English prisons of 34%.

**BETTER OUTCOMES**

3.19 A new governor was appointed early in the reporting year. He, and his management team, quickly identified key issues and put together a strategic plan with clear objectives and outcomes. Of necessity, the focus for much of the year to August 2017 was on staffing problems, improving safety on the wings with the limited staffing available, and reintroducing purposeful discipline. It has been a slow and difficult process. The atmosphere and morale of the prison began to improve in the spring, and continued to do so. Work on a strategic plan, and on the recommendations made by HMIP after its inspection in January 2017, continued in parallel.

3.20 By the end of the reporting year, conditions on three wings in Brixton (C, D and G) were stable. On A and B wing, regime changes and the start of a full induction programme were moves in the right direction. Partnership working between the different sections of the prison and its agencies, offering a more coherent approach to resettlement and its preconditions, like drug counselling work, improved in the second half of the year. A new IEP policy and an analysis of resettlement needs was being completed, and a stronger focus on resettlement was within sight. Achieving that goal depends on maintaining staff numbers, reducing drug supplies, and improving safety and security, particularly on A and B wings.

The Board considers that, to support the coming year’s work in Brixton, the following outcomes are desirable:

**THAT THE MINISTER:**

3.21 Maintain funding for adequate prison staffing. (4.4; 4.5; 4.13; 4.18-4.19; 5.1; 5.15; 6.1; 7.1; 7.2; 7.7; 8.5; 9.4; 11.4)

3.22 Coordinate with colleagues in Health to ensure an adequate provision both for the diversion of mentally ill offenders from prison, and for those offenders in the prison system whose condition becomes acute; and to provide better support for prisoners with autism and learning disabilities. (5.5; 6.1-6.2; 8.13; 8.17; 9.1)
3.23 Coordinate with colleagues in Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to encourage industry providers to work with the prison service to disable mobile phone accounts used only from within the prison. (4.15)

3.24 Encourage urgent action by government departments, charities, local authorities and the London Mayor to increase the availability of good hostel accommodation for prisoners on their release, including approved premises where the Parole Board requires it. Accommodation on release is a vital factor in reducing reoffending. (11.8, A.7-A.9)

**THAT HMPPS:**

3.25 Increase the number of drug dogs available to HMP Brixton, to enable routine searching at visits, together with more regular searches of mail, the prison perimeter, wings and activity blocks. (4.12)

3.26 Address the longstanding failure in reception prisons to provide prisoners with sentence plans identifying risks and targets for rehabilitation. (11.3)

3.27 Aim to ensure that the requirements of these plans have more influence on the establishments to which offenders are sent during their sentence. (5.3)

3.28 Aim to ensure that there are normally places available in open prisons for those prisoners who are eligible for them. (3.15)

3.29 Increase the number of courses available for behavioural problems and make better provision for men with identified psychological disorders. (8.17)

3.30 Develop a policy for the more humane treatment of prisoners over 65, including standards for accommodation. (5.2; 7.1; 8.15)

3.31 Provide a policy steer to establishments on the findings of the Lammy review, for instance on how to tackle the over-representation of BAME men in prison discipline procedures. (5.6)

3.32 Bring forward the promised new policy on property, to reduce the delays in restoring property to prisoners or compensating them. (7.9)

3.33 Reconsider the practice of certifying cells in Brixton as suitable for double occupancy unless they meet the minimum requirement of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, which is 4m² of living space per person plus a fully partitioned WC. (7.1)

3.34 Consider, in the light of experience in Scottish prisons, whether the 'additional days' penalty should be reviewed. (3.18)

3.35 Fill the longstanding vacancy for an Anglican chaplain in Brixton, one apparent consequence of which has been a decline in prison visitors. (5.8-5.9)

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2 An Anglican Chaplain is now expected to be in post in early 2018.
THAT THE HEAD OF HEALTHCARE:

3.36 Monitor the number of missed hospital appointments, so that the causes can be identified and addressed. (8.5)

3.37 The Board is raising no issues with the Governor of Brixton in this year’s report. It will continue to discuss matters of local concern with him monthly, or if necessary as they arise. The more strategic issues identified as areas for improvement have been discussed with the Governor, to confirm that they cannot be tackled locally.
4. SAFETY

Reception

4.1 Newly arrived prisoners are held in bare holding cells, usually in groups. The staff office is located out of sight of these cells, and there is no information or material available to occupy prisoners.

4.2 Risk assessments are carried out by Reception officers and by Healthcare staff. Accommodation was altered to ensure that both may be done confidentially. Two peer orderlies, one of whom is a Listener (a prisoner trained by the Samaritans) support new arrivals with the completion of forms. The process is normally one-to-one and overseen by staff, but on at least one occasion, this information was provided in a holding cell with the orderly locked in with the newly arrived prisoners.

4.3 Prisoners are told that the earliest they can make a telephone call is the next day. This is of concern for prisoners who have not been given notice of their transfer to HMP Brixton. If a large number of prisoners arrives at the same time, these processes can be rushed, with too little time for the recording of property; relevant case notes and interviews.

4.4 IMB members have noted that while prisoners were treated with dignity and respect by Reception staff, it was often the orderly who had the time to provide them with the necessary information for their early days in Brixton.

Induction

4.5 From Reception, prisoners were generally taken to B wing, or G wing. For much of the year induction was poor and not supervised by staff. Information is provided by peer support orderlies, and prisoners find it useful, although some say they get most information from their cell mate. Learning and Skills induction was often delayed and too easy for men to avoid, but by the summer generally happened within two weeks of arrival.

4.6 A new induction programme, which will be in place in October 2017, will improve prisoner assessment and the selection of appropriate training and work, setting out a route map towards release. It includes an innovative, prisoner-led radio programme with short interviews, including one with a released prisoner enthusiastic about his job.

Drugs and phones

4.7 In early 2017, in line with an HMIP recommendation, a comprehensive strategy and action plan for controlling the demand and supply of drugs was published and monthly drug strategy meetings were resumed after a long gap. As of July, the necessary buy-in across all prison departments was still not evident. Illegal drugs, particularly PS and cannabis, continued to be easily available. The problem was worse on A and B wings, housing about half of the population.
4.8 The mandatory drug testing (MDT) failure rate dropped from a high of 30% in November 2016 to an average of 14% between March and August 2017, although it remained volatile. This was above the prison service target of 11%. For A and B wings only, the rate was around 30%.

4.9 Although testing for PS is now in place, it is not yet required to be reported centrally. In Brixton, the failure rate including PS would be double the reported rate. In June, for instance, the reported failure rate was 18%, but 38% if PS was included. This was despite increased publicity across the prison of the dangers of PS, an increased rate of referral to drug counselling (from June), and the frequent sight on A and B wings of men in conditions of distress because of drug use.

4.10 Possession and use of mobile phones also remained a significant problem. Known sources of drug, phone and sim card importation include visitors, including to the Clink restaurant for a time, mail, and throw-overs. The ending of Release on Temporary License (ROTL) in January appeared to have a temporary positive effect on the rate of trafficking drugs and phones into the prison. The profit margins on drugs in prison are so much higher than on the street that other potential routes were soon found.

4.11 In May, incentive-based drug testing (IBDT) was re-introduced on C wing, because substance misuse by key workers housed there could put them and others at risk. As of August, there had been only one failure. However, the test used does not detect use of PS.

4.12 There were too few sniffer dogs to check the known supply channels routinely. There were only seven days in November 2016 when dogs were available, and eight in April 2017. Additional dogs promised in the spring did not appear. By the end of July the prison had access to only a single dog handler for two days a week, to coincide with some visits. The availability and use of drugs encourages bullying, debt, and violent enforcement, so the lack of dogs completely undermines the prison’s efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment. The Board considers that the regular use of drug dogs would reduce both the misery of PS and its costs, in bullying, violence, and in additional work for healthcare and officers.

4.13 The prison found and confiscated significant amounts of contraband but seemed unable to stem the ingress of drugs and phones with available resources, which limited, for example, the number of cell searches undertaken.

4.14 A debt deterrence toolkit was published in April but there was little evidence by August of its effectiveness. Threats to family members for payment of debts remained common and men in debt continued to self-isolate at about the same levels as the previous year. For most of the year, the Board was concerned about whether these men were adequately supported or received regular time out of cell.

4.15 Mobile phones are the essential facilitators for arranging drug deliveries, collecting debts and maintaining control of criminal enterprises. Prisons would be safer places if they could be deactivated. Phone providers, who have the necessary information, could be encouraged to do this, if this were a Government priority.

4.16 RAPT (Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust, now Forward Trust) typically had about 300 on their caseload, working one to one with men as well as running Stepping
Stones, a four-week drug and alcohol programme for groups of 10-15. Attendance on this course improved as the regime became more stable. RAPT also manages D wing, offering up to 48 men a 6 to 12 step programme focusing on abstinence. Success levels were good: in the first 6 months of 2017, 30 out of 44 men completed the course. Graduates usefully acted as peer mentors for men on other wings. Most were followed up after release and some returned to give encouragement.

4.17 The Board is concerned that assaults on prisoners and staff were not routinely investigated by the police or prosecuted. The Board considers that unless assaults in prison are investigated on the same basis as those outside, there is no effective deterrence of severe violence, at a level beyond the disciplinary sanctions available to the prison. There were some indications that this is was changing, and the Board welcomes the prompt investigation of a prisoner’s rape in August.

**Safer Custody**

4.18 A great deal of progress has been made since the HMIP inspection in January 2017. Most importantly, safety is now seen as everyone’s responsibility and the section is adequately staffed. Monthly Safer Custody meetings were well-attended – although Healthcare attendance has not been consistent – and characterised by creative discussion, including from Listeners.

4.19 The number of men at risk of self-harm (‘on an ACCT’) reduced in July and August from a recent high of 23 to 10. This indicated that the prison is managing the threshold for opening an ACCT, and has better processes for recognising men trying to manipulate the system. There are clearer definitions of responsibility for ACCTs and more consistency in management, with more checks by duty governors and senior staff. As a result of these improvements in procedure, the quality of care was gradually improving. However, some ACCT reviews took place without Healthcare support, and the documents were still not routinely moving with A and B wing men to their activities. So off-wing staff are not able to take into account any risks for the prisoner, and their observations on his behaviour are not recorded.

4.20 The Board has observed the patience and compassion with which most ACCT reviews were conducted. In one such case, a man with a long record of severe self-harm was successfully managed off dependence on constant supervision to a more stable condition, on a plan developed by a part-time psychiatrist, with support from mental health nurses, Safer Custody, his offender supervisor, and wing staff.

4.21 There are still too few ACCT assessors although more have been trained in-house. There is a target to give 204 staff the full training on suicide and self-harm in 18 months. By August over 50 had completed or were completing it. About 60 staff, a third of the target, have been trained on body-worn cameras and the five minute intervention, as part of the strategy for reducing violence. This is a great improvement over last year when there was very little staff training.

4.22 Listener numbers fluctuated, inevitably in a pre-release prison, averaging seven in the first half of the year and nine in the second. Measures were in hand to recruit up to 20, and to improve the present distribution and availability across the wings. Listeners were given a ‘Red Band passport’ to allow them to circulate more freely, including to G wing, to make daily visits to the Segregation unit, visit Reception occasionally, and to
respond to distressed prisoners in all wings other than D. Listeners’ contacts with distressed prisoners in the first half of 2017 rose by about 25% over the same period in 2016 (and considerably more on G wing). Listeners checked the Samaritans phones weekly. These phones are now kept in locked boxes to prevent damage, which has been chronic.

4.23 In Reception, procedures to identify risk have improved: if necessary, a care plan is opened there. Three violence reduction (VR) prisoner representatives have been trained to replace those suspended on security grounds a year earlier. The VR reps were more visible in Reception and Induction, though still not consistently enough, sometimes because there is no escorting officer available. The Board welcomes the aim to pre-empt self-harm by identifying risk in advance, and the use of a prisoner focus group on violence reduction measures. It is too early to say that a cultural change has been achieved.

4.24 Reporting of violence is another work in progress. In January 2017, an external audit of self-harm and violence reporting gave the lowest possible marks for data accuracy and responses to it: by April, a similar audit gave the highest possible mark. In December 2016, 30% of prisoners surveyed said they felt unsafe. A survey of staff in April showed 50% felt unsafe, but 92% believed violence was falling. Previous under-reporting meant that this year’s more accurate figures showed an apparent rise in violence. In fact, better reporting has enabled predictions of where and when violence is more likely to occur. Use of force was lower, averaging 12 occasions a month, mostly connected with cell searches, compared to 14 last year.

4.25 More attention was paid to supporting victims, by moving them off the wing or transferring them, than to controlling the perpetrators. In December 2016, of five violent prisoners identified by wing staff as being of particular concern, none was on a management plan. It was clear in July 2017 that some available sanctions, for instance restrictions on movement within the wing, were not being used. A new behavioural compact aims to challenge perpetrators.

4.26 There were no deaths in custody this year, but three near-misses, two relating to self-harm and one to illness. At the recent inquest on a death in 2015, the coroner thanked prison staff for their care and support of the deceased’s family and made no specific recommendations relating to prison procedures or healthcare. There are no inquests outstanding. The Board regrets that for half the year there were no family liaison officers, when the minimum requirement is two. Five candidates have been identified for training, which will not happen before end November 2017.

4.27 Constant supervision (CS) of prisoners at risk of self-harm, usually by staff from agencies, was patchy in practice. IMB observed some staff not engaging fully with the prisoner. Arrangements for the supervisors’ comfort – for instance meal breaks – were poor. In the final quarter of the year, some guidance was issued on effective monitoring and interaction with prisoners, and personal evacuation plans were produced. It is too early to note an improvement in practice. New CS cells, better located away from busy areas, have been established on A and G wings. This has helped to reduce the use of the Segregation unit – often noisy or disrupted during the year – for CS.
5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Inadequate work on equalities, and on personal evacuation plans for prisoners with mobility problems was noted by HMIP in January 2017. This changed in the spring. Meetings were held regularly in the second half of the reporting year. Given the low starting point, much of the effort was devoted to considering population data and re-establishing a structure of representative special interest groups. Action plans for all protected interest groups are yet to be produced.

5.2 Data on age and disability revealed that in July there were 71 prisoners aged over 55, of whom 18 were between 65 and 74, and 12 between 75 and 84. All the men in the oldest band were on G Wing. Concerns about their social care were yet to be resolved in August, despite efforts by the prison to engage the local authority. There are not enough single cells, and only two men can be accommodated on the ground floor of G. There is a dedicated room for the use of older men, who are unlocked morning and afternoon, and an action plan is being implemented.

5.3 The intention to populate G wing only with prisoners who had completed the required courses, and had connections within the Brixton catchment area, was swept aside by population pressures at the time of the transfer. The Board deplores this. Four months later, in July, the prison was still working with other establishments that run treatment programmes to transfer men. This delay may have reduced the affected individuals’ chances of rehabilitation.

5.4 Monitoring of complaints about discrimination (DIRF forms) improved, although in August there was a delay in dealing with them because of staff leave. The low number received suggests that the process was not as well understood amongst prisoners as it should be. Monitoring also revealed the comparatively low priority given to DIRFs, and some offhand responses.

5.5 179 prisoners were recorded as having a disability, of whom 149 had a registered disability. This is almost 25% of the prison population, compared with of around 19% for the UK population as a whole. In both cases, it is likely that the incidence of disability is underreported. Mental health disability was the highest single factor. Two profoundly deaf prisoners were given some consideration but there was a lack of imagination in finding a solution for giving them better contact with their families. Skype was not possible, and only a text phone was provided.

5.6 For adjudications, younger men were over-represented, as were prisoners recorded as Black, Mixed, and White Other. No work has been done on this. In the context of the Lammy report, and the availability of such data for some years, the Board is concerned that there has been no policy steer from HMPPS.

5.7 Data on declared religious affiliation in July 2017 was:

- Muslim 25%;
- Christian 48% (a significant increase on last year; Catholic 18%; Anglican 15%; other Christian 14%, Pentecostal 1%)
- Other 5%
- No religion 17%
- 1% for each of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Rastafarian, and Sikh.
Chaplaincy

5.8 The vacancy for an Anglican chaplain remained open. The last full-time ordained Anglican left the prison in spring 2015. IMB has raised its concerns with three successive governors, and this year with the regional lead in HMPPS and the Anglican bishop for prisons, who has not replied. As in previous years, the vacancy was covered by regular sessional support on weekdays, with Anglican and free church services alternating on Sundays. There were study groups for the two main faiths, Christianity and Islam. There were visiting chaplains for a range of other faiths. Ramadan arrangements were good. There were no complaints to IMB about religious articles, and only one about diets, on kosher food.

5.9 Although sessional chaplains covered statutory duties, there was heavy pressure on the one permanent Christian chaplain for general pastoral support, not least because the proportion of Christians in the prison had increased. HMIP reported that chaplains were not visible enough, and the Board considered that the chaplaincy was unable to assume its full role in the life of the prison. There was little contact between the chaplaincy and residential staff, and not enough information generally available about support for the faiths with a small proportion of adherents, although such chaplains did visit.

5.10 IMB did not see chaplains involved in resettlement or other support activities, like ACCT reviews, until towards the end of the reporting year. In August, there was a wing lockdown on a Friday after an incident involving a large number of men. The Board was concerned that no Muslim chaplain was available to visit Muslims who had been prevented from attending Friday prayers.

5.11 There were only two or three regular prison visitors, a decline; and two applications to become a prison visitor, received in 2016, had not progressed by the end August 2017. IMB considers that an increase in the number of prison visitors is essential, not least because some men on G wing have no family visitors.

IEP

5.12 The most significant change in IEP (incentive and earned privilege scheme) during the year was the use of C Wing for enhanced prisoners and full-time workers. The Board found that there was rarely a waiting list of qualified prisoners, which suggests that the scheme constitutes a real incentive rather than an impossible target. Conversely, the impact on A and B Wings, by the removal of more compliant prisoners, may have aggravated the more volatile environment there. The Governor is aware of the need to keep the impact under review.

5.13 A new IEP policy, informed by discussion with the prison council, focus groups and IMB, was produced but not yet implemented at the end of the reporting period. During the year, as in 2015-16, the proportion of men on basic IEP was higher than the national average. There were 70 in the first quarter of the reporting year, falling to 60 in the second quarter (November to February), probably because the roll was lower. From March to May, the number on basic fell to 50, possibly because G and C wings were calmer, and then to 33 in June. In July, men on A Wing were put on basic for obscuring
observation panels at night (a safety issue) and the total rose to 71, falling back to 49 in August.

5.14 In January, HMIP found that men on basic were given few targets for improvement and had poor access to showers and telephones. Also, the invariable minimum length of basic was 28 days, although the policy allows for a shorter period. The maximum time out of cell where basic conditions were being enforced remained under four hours a day, sometimes only half an hour if the man were refusing work or activity, with no evening association. This is not conducive to resettlement.

5.15 In the second half of the reporting year, IMB saw some improvements in the recording of weekly reviews of men on basic. On A Wing, the largest and most difficult to manage with continuing staff shortages, some men on basic were usually unlocked with their cellmate, if the later was on standard. It was not impossible for men on basic on A and B wings to acquire a television illicitly, again because of a lack of staff supervision. The new wing regimes introduced in late August should improve enforcement and, the Board hopes, encourage men to get on to standard IEP.

Visits

5.16 The visits area is satisfactory, though small; the accommodation for visitors waiting for the visits sessions to begin is inadequate, and there is no provision for relatives waiting for a prisoner to be released. There is a possibility that better visitor facilities will be provided in the coming year. Visitors have told IMB that they are treated with respect by search staff. The Bad Boys Bakery café in the visits hall provides sandwiches, cakes and hot drinks. There have been successful family days, and initiatives supported by the PACT charity, which also works with prisoners on the wings.

5.17 The high proportion of prisoners on basic means that a significant number of families are restricted to visits of only 30 minutes. This does not align with the conclusions of the Farmer report on the importance of strengthening prisoners’ family ties, to prevent reoffending and intergenerational crime. Ministry of Justice research found that a prisoner who receives visits from a partner or family member is 39% less likely to reoffend.

5.18 Prisoners failing an MDT (mandatory drug test) are automatically placed on closed visits. Originally, this was for a period of three months. After representations by the Board, as well as criticism from HMIP, this has been amended to an automatic period of one month. This will be extended only for good reason, such as evidence that a controlled substance was passed to the prisoner during a visit, or that the prisoner is acting as a dealer.

Adjudications

5.19 Until February the prison’s process for forwarding appeals against adjudication was ad hoc and error-prone. Since then appeals have been routinely logged but there has been no follow-up when responses have taken more than the recommended 20 days. Appeals against the Independent Adjudicator have generally been satisfactory, though one took 3 months. There have been no responses to seven appeals against Governor adjudications since February, because of an administrative confusion.
6. SEGREGATION

6.1 The Segregation unit was full most of the year. It was sometimes necessary for IMB and other visitors to see and speak to men in the unit through their doors because there were not enough staff to unlock them. A number of men with mental health problems – some very severe – have been in the unit, partly because it was a better place for constant supervision than on the wings. Typically, about a third of the men in the unit are on ACCTs, on the basis that this is the least bad option, despite the national policy that this should be exceptional. Procedural requirements on this issue have been better met.

6.2 The unit is a difficult place for the delivery of one to one mental health interventions. As in previous years, there have been long delays in getting mental health beds elsewhere in the prison estate, for instance in establishments with 24-hour healthcare, and in secure hospitals. This is unacceptable.

6.3 Physical conditions in Segregation are on a par with the rest of the prison – the accommodation is old and in poor condition. Until it was refurbished in August, the shower was difficult to keep clean, and potentially dangerous. There was more than usual prisoner damage to cells this year, and frequent shortages of radios for that reason. A smoking ban was introduced on 1 August, without notice, which caused problems.

6.4 On at least 10 occasions, men’s property did not transfer to the unit with them, and there was no cell clearance form. This became less common as better order was restored in the prison, although in August a prisoner’s canteen went missing, unrecorded.

6.5 Adjudications were held in the cramped office, which contains the only staff telephone. Both adjudications and sensitive ACCT reviews were liable to be interrupted by phone calls that had to be taken. The unit will be extended next year. HMIP noted that the number of adjudications at Brixton was three times more than in other category C prisons. In the Board’s experience, adjudications are conducted fairly, and sometimes used by governors to explore and resolve problems rather than as a simple process of determining penalties.

6.6 The use of the special cell has reduced over the reporting year and recording has improved in line with HMIP recommendations. There have been no segregation monitoring meetings during the reporting period.

6.7 Regular segregation unit staff behaved with calmness and compassion, often in difficult circumstances and with prisoners who have repetitive behaviour patterns. Prisoners often acknowledge this to IMB.
7. ACCOMODATION

7.1 Population pressures make the inadequate accommodation in Brixton worse. Most of the 600 men on A, B and G wings are housed in cramped double cells with an inadequately screened WC. Meals in these wings have to be eaten in the cell or standing on the landing. Although cells have been certified for double occupancy, they do not offer decent living conditions for two men. Most of the men on these wings are in only part-time work or training at best and are out of their cells for not more than about 5 hours a day; there is a limited time for showers and association and minimal evening time out of cell when men might be able to telephone their families. Only the 134 men on C wing have larger cells, some with separate lavatories. They are typically out of cell for about nine hours a day, with an hour’s association in the early evening once a week. This is closer to the conditions to be expected for a category C prison.

7.2 The objective of maintaining safety and security was achieved for A and B Wings at the expense of resettlement objectives and, in the case of B Wing, decency, as there was a regular 24 hour lockdown from Friday to Saturday lunchtime. The shortage of staff also meant that there were whole prison lockdowns once or twice a month to enable staff training to take place. In February, the new population arrived on G before staff could clean and reequip the wing.

Food, clothing and equipment

7.3 Food is generally plentiful and good but breakfast packs are meagre and handed out the previous lunchtime and, by the morning, bread is stale. The kitchen is well managed and clean. There are more microwaves and toasters on the wings (a result of consultation with the prison council) and a good range of foodstuffs is available for purchase through canteen.

7.4 Problems with the control of canteen distribution have been alleviated by distributing canteen door to door on A, B and D wings.

7.5 Some problems remained with ensuring that there was sufficient prison-issue clothing and furniture for cells, but things improved markedly by the end of the year. The washing machines have insufficient capacity and, consequently, were in use almost continuously which resulted in breakdowns. The machines on B Wing were out of action several times for significant periods. There were insufficient TVs, radios and kettles during the year but there are now usually enough.

7.6 Wings were generally cleaner than they were last year, although IMB continued to note lapses, particularly in the servery and shower areas. Showers on A and D wings offer little privacy and are in poor condition.

Personal Officers

7.7 There was little or no Personal Officer work. The Five Minute Intervention programme being rolled out goes some way towards reinstating the principle that staff must build relationships with prisoners, but it will not run effectively until there are more experienced and regular staff on the landings. Staffing of the wings, although improving, was not consistent due to cross-deployment and, for the first half of the year, the use of
detached duty staff who did not always know the prisoners. Few observations by wing staff were recorded on PNOMIS, except for those on breaches of discipline.

**Property**

7.8 Problems with accessing property from Reception eased as better reception processes were put in place. Property lost, because cell clearance recording was not properly done when a prisoner moved, accounted for about half of the 155 COMP 1s in December but had fallen to fewer than 20 a month by May. Problems with property not following men on transfer from other prisons continued to be a significant issue, especially with the re-roll of G wing in February.

7.9 Responses to such property complaints were frequently very late. Property has accounted for 14% of applications to the IMB this year, and about 10% of the prison’s since December. Compensation processes are slow and resource-intensive, frequently involving the Ombudsman. The Board considers that the new policy promised in response to previous annual reports should be brought forward.

**Complaints**

7.10 The introduction of Prisoner Information Desks on the wings in the spring reduced the level of dissatisfaction with general applications and contributed to a drop in the number of prison complaints and IMB applications. Replacement of PID workers who have been released was slow. There was no action on tracking applications/responses, which was an HMIP recommendation. The unreliability of the system undermines prisoner confidence in its usefulness.

**Communications**

7.11 Communication and consultation with prisoners improved over the year, both through the prison council and through wing meetings.
8. HEALTHCARE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

8.1 Healthcare functions well within the Healthcare centre, and HMIP noted in January that ‘access to nurses and GPs is good’. Men go to appointments during free flow. 14% of appointments were missed, for reasons which are not recorded. Most applications to the IMB during the year concerned appointments and delays.

8.2 The waiting time for GP appointments echoed that in the community. HMIP found, however, that waiting times for dental, optometrist and podiatrist were too long in January. After G wing was re-rolled, waiting times increased because two separate sessions had to be reserved for the sex offender population. Additional dental sessions were provided, but there were still difficulties at the end of the reporting year. There is a sexual health nurse and a visiting specialist. Hepatitis C treatment is available and Kings College Hospital run a Hepatitis C clinic fortnightly.

8.3 The head of Healthcare has told IMB that the high proportion of elderly men on G Wing has generated more pressure, and will continue to do so. There is, however, currently no specific clinic or provision for the elderly: and although flu and pneumonia injections have been available as in the community, shingles vaccination was not offered during the year.

8.4 In two cases in July, an elderly man was admitted to hospital as an emergency. One considered that his problem had not been taken seriously by nurses and there were questions about the other's treatment. These cases have been investigated by Healthcare and by the prison. For the whole population, the lack of evening and night cover means that emergency services have to be called more often as a precaution. In August there were two incidents in the early evening where first aid was needed, but the nurses were going off shift, and the men had to wait.

8.5 Of hospital appointments, 43% were cancelled; 11% because of a lack of escorts. The reasons for the other cancellations were not recorded. This high level of cancellations is a potentially damaging to the prisoners’ health, as well as an additional cost to the NHS. Telemedicine is not as useful as it might be because hospitals often replicate its findings at first hospital appointment.

8.6 There is continuity of care for men transferring into Brixton. Men being released are registered with a local GP if they have an address. Prescription services and dispensaries also function well. The default Healthcare practice is to keep drug users on maintenance dose, whereas prison policy is to get men off drugs completely. In August 2017, 31 men were on a maintenance methadone prescription and 16 on a detox dose.

8.7 HMIP commended the use of Health Trainers and certified peer mentors to motivate and educate prisoners to improve their health. Healthcare functions less well in co-operation with the prison. They were often not represented or involved in meetings about safer custody, drug strategy, or complex cases – men whose behaviour is difficult for a number of reasons. So policy making and practice was less effective, disadvantaging vulnerable prisoners.

8.8 Healthcare also fell down on its obligation to attend Rule 45 and ACCT reviews. IMB routinely noted their absence, and has seen governors and officers ringing round
several times to get someone there. On one occasion, it took three hours for a nurse to get to the medical screening required when a man is brought to the Segregation unit, despite repeated requests to the head of Healthcare and her deputy. In late October 2016, no GP visited the Segregation unit for nine days. Attendance every three days, as required, has happened since then. However, IMB considers that this was not always sufficient with so many men in a poor state. A dedicated Segregation nurse was appointed in mid-August.

**Mental Health**

8.9 The HMIP inspection of Brixton noted that ‘prisoners have good access to a suitable range of mental health interventions.’ However, in the Board’s view, there are significant exceptions. It is difficult for mental health staff to assess prisoners who are regime refusers and stay behind their doors, or men in Segregation. Towards the end of the reporting year, senior uniformed staff were working more closely with Mental Health to improve access to these men.

8.10 The absence of mental health staff from meetings and reviews, including at least one constant supervision (CS) review, is particularly damaging for men’s progress, resulting in an incomplete view of their needs and prognoses. Prison staff are not qualified to take decisions about whether a man is safe to be taken off an ACCT or CS without medical advice. Sometimes this is due to a failure of communication, or meetings being arranged or changed at short notice. Case loads for mental health are high: recruitment, retention of staff is difficult and the use of agency staff leads to lack of continuity.

8.11 The lack of 24/7 health cover in Brixton is particularly difficult with regard to mental health care. Although most substance misuse staff are registered mental health nurses and can initiate basic interventions, and all health care staff can access a prisoner’s records, there is no advice available for untrained prison staff overnight and on bank holidays, and effectively no emergency service. For example, around lunchtime on Christmas day, a man had to be placed in the special cell in the Segregation unit. He remained there until the next morning, when an IMB member was told that he had not yet been assessed. Mental health staff had been contacted, and advised that the man should be put on constant supervision if necessary.

8.12 Lack of mental health staff can also affect the dispensing of medication. Injectable medication effective over days or weeks is an alternative. In-possession medication is dispensed only after a risk assessment.

8.13 Only one prisoner at Brixton has been sectioned and transferred to a secure hospital in the last three years. However, in May, a man was transferred to Brixton despite having significant mental health issues and being category B. The lack of beds in secure hospitals and the little time remaining on the man’s sentence was no reason for him to come to Brixton. The prison is equally inappropriate for a significant small proportion of prisoners with serious mental illnesses or personality disorders.

8.14 Mental health training sessions for prison staff, an HMIP recommendation, began in mid-August. IMB remains concerned that there are too few staff to support the ongoing training.
Social Care

8.15 Lambeth Council is responsible for providing social care to Brixton prisoners equivalent to the standard in the community. Although there are a few men over 55 on other wings, the need is concentrated on G wing. Despite efforts by the head of Healthcare and a governor to engage Lambeth, the local authority had failed to make any significant contribution by the end of the reporting year. The wing custody manager, with support from Learning & Skills, established a group of prisoners to help men with care needs. These prisoner helpers can help only during unlock hours, not at night, and are not able to do all the functions of a trained carer, for instance there was a problem with getting daily medication to men who have difficulty getting downstairs to the dispensary. The Board considers that the conditions for these elderly men – their accommodation, the lack of provision for age-related conditions like reduced mobility and incontinence, and the lack of professional assessment and social care, as legally required – are not acceptable.

Psychological Support

8.16 The London Pathway Unit (LPU), with spaces for 36 men and good programmes involving wing staff as well as psychologists, remained underused for most of the year. After criteria for admission were modified, numbers increased to just under 30 at the end of the reporting year.

8.17 Apart from the LPU, there was little psychological support. One man, in the Segregation unit because of his behaviour difficulties, had to wait several weeks for an assessment to determine autism. For the general population with less severe problems, only two offending behaviour courses were run during the year. There was no clear pathway for men with learning disabilities or autism.
9. **EDUCATION AND OTHER PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY**

9.1 Novus provide education services within the prison. Courses cover a reasonable range of subjects including Open University and distance learning. There is a need for more specific and tailored support for men with learning difficulties as well as a greater range of higher level qualifications that will support men into employment after release.

9.2 The quality of teaching and learning is improving but is not yet satisfactory across all areas. Prisoner access to classes was affected by the restricted regime. This resulted in tutors not being able to plan properly and having to go over topics in later classes for those who missed sessions. Educational outcomes were not good.

9.3 In addition, educational allocation did not take account of the regime - meaning that a man who has time out of his cell for domestic tasks in the morning and is behind his door in the afternoon can be allocated a morning class. In these circumstances, the man has to decide between a class and a shower and phone call. Unsurprisingly, many men in this position choose not to go to classes.

9.4 The average attendance against capacity was 44.4%, reflecting a gradual increase over the year, up from 37% in November 2016 to just over 50% in August 2017. This reflects better staffing on the wings, but is still unsatisfactory.

9.5 When G wing was populated with sex offenders, education and training opportunities had to be reallocated to maintain their segregation from the other wings. The classes on music technology, horticulture, and textiles were reserved for G wing men, who also work in the kitchen.

9.6 The library, run by Lambeth, is well stocked and welcoming but too small to allow for wing visits and any activity, like a book club, at the same time. Library staff can collect prisoners from the wings. Attendance has been boosted by G wing men, but is little changed for other wings. It is not open at weekends (an HMIP recommendation). Men would not have been able to get there had it been open.

9.7 There are two gym facilities, and around 50% of the population attend at least twice a week. All prisoners receive a gym induction including advice on healthy living, diet and nutrition. Older/infirm men are well catered for. Although HMIP commented on the shortfall in staff – four against a complement of seven – all required sessions are provided, and more.
10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

10.1 Approximately 255 prisoners (August 2017 average) are employed within the prison. There is an expanding number of roles for advice and peer support, like Prisoner Information Desks, some of it accredited. HMIP noted that much of the wing work was unchallenging, and not allocated according to a man’s needs or capabilities. For some men, however, work on the wings may be a first step to developing a work habit, and the confidence that they can actually do something.

10.2 There is a range of vocational training opportunities. The Bounce Back building trades courses seem to be a particularly good route to a job. The Bad Boys Bakery and the Clink restaurant continue to provide accredited training and, like Bounce Back, support men after release. Clink’s reoffending rate, across all their operations, is less than 5%. However these workshops provide training for less than 10% of the population.
11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 The prison continued to support resettlement. In April, the Prison Reform Trust ‘Out for Good’ programme, in partnership with Community Bounce Back resulted in employers including TfL, Keltbray, Thames Tideway, and Young’s Brewery offering 18 job opportunities to prisoners on release.

11.2 Preparation for resettlement should start when a prisoner arrives in Brixton. For much of the reporting year, the focus had to be on restoring safety and order. The lack of a developed induction programme until August, and cross-deployment pressures on OMU (the offender management unit) meant that many men were not given a clear direction towards resettlement pathways. Some men were able to get themselves on courses and access services without support from their offender supervisor. For prisoners less able to take the initiative in planning their own future – those most in need of help – this lack of support reduced their chances of getting a job to go out to. Such men were sometimes also the most likely to be homeless on release (see Annex A).

11.3 Men continue to arrive at Brixton without a completed sentence plan (OASys), which reception prisons are expected to provide. HMIP noted the backlog in January 2017: at the end of July, 230 prisoners, around 30% of the population, had outstanding or incomplete OASys plans. This problem has been endemic since Brixton became a resettlement prison, and the Board has made recommendations about it to HMPPS every year since. Efforts to reduce the backlog occasionally make a dent in the numbers, but the problem cannot be solved without action by HMPPS better to enable or enforce work on sentence planning in reception prisons.

11.4 Cross-deployment of officers working in OMU, because of staff shortages, exacerbated the difficulty. This continued throughout the year, and makes planning difficult, because officers may be called away on the day, for instance if a wing officer has reported sick. Wing surgeries take place when there is enough cover – on one day in August there was only one officer in OMU – and sometimes using civilian staff. Unsurprisingly, prisoners often put in complaints, and applications to IMB, because they have not seen their offender supervisor.

11.5 Decisions on re-categorisation and HDC (home detention curfew) are given priority because they are within Brixton’s remit. The process for HDC has been made more efficient over the year. Pre-release planning involving multi-disciplinary agencies is effective. Lifer prisoners who are not in the London Pathway Unit (about 50%) are to be transferred. IMB hope that places can be found for them that will give them more opportunities for progression than Brixton. However, transfer processes, especially for difficult prisoners, are often slow, and all have to be dealt with individually.

11.6 Penrose (the local CRC) provides referral services on housing, through their partnership with St Mungo’s, and employment via Job Centre Plus and National Careers Service as well as limited support for finances and debt. They reported that 88% of men were seen before release over the year and that 82% of prisoners had accommodation to go to, many with family and friends. Over a quarter of men said they would be going into employment or education. In IMB’s survey of 68 men from mid May to mid July (Annex A), the equivalent figures were 70% seen (although this may be understated), 60% with
accommodation for more than a week, and 30% with a job to go to. Just over half of the men surveyed by IMB either had a job, were going on a course, or were confident that they had job leads they could follow up.

11.7 It is difficult to judge the effectiveness of the CRC's services from the monthly reports provided to the prison, and these are to be discontinued. IMB has seen little indication that there is any follow-up after initial referral. As for other agencies, the restricted regime made it more difficult for CRC to see prisoners. Their ‘Getting it Right’ programme, which includes resettlement advice, initially scheduled for 2015, started in July 2017. Two courses were completed in the reporting year.

11.8 In the IMB's resettlement survey, more men had jobs to go to this year than in the equivalent period in 2016. This reflected the work of a number of agencies working separately from CRC, including the Prison Reform Trust, those providing training in the prison, and RAPt. The CRC had found long-term accommodation for less than 10% of those who had somewhere to go on release. 18 men, a quarter of those surveyed, had no job and either temporary or no accommodation. Such men have little hope of not reoffending. Without an address, they cannot be registered with a GP, although they are more likely to have complex needs, and they are less likely to get a legitimate job. The shortage of housing for single men in London, and the shortage of approved premises, needs to be addressed if men with the most difficulties and least family support are to avoid the revolving door.
THE WORK OF THE IMB

Four new members joined the Board towards the end of 2016, and one member transferred from another board. Four existing members went on sabbatical in the first half of the reporting year, because of illness or pressure of work. Two of these, and a member on sabbatical from mid-2016 have now resigned. One of the new members transferred, as intended, to another board. So by the end of the reporting year, the Board had 12 members, two of them on sabbatical, plus one probationer, whose training had been delayed by illness. The complement is 20.

Board members have worked well together to cover rota duties, training visits for the new members, and special interest meetings. Review boards, and ACCT reviews in the segregation unit have been attended where possible. Five serious incidents have been observed.

Monthly meetings have been attended by the Governing Governor or his Deputy. The Board thanks them for their open and constructive approach.

The Board also thanks members of the prison management team, officers, and staff from agencies working in the prison for their help, in explaining their roles at Board meetings, to new members, and in dealing with queries day to day.

The number of applications to the Board decreased over the year, as information and advice on the wings improved and the prison became more stable. The annual total was 513.

BOARD STATISTICS

| Recommended Complement of Board Members | 20 |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 11 |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period | 12 |
| Total number of visits to the Establishment | 502 |
| Total number of segregation reviews attended | Not recorded |
## Applications to the Board

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<td>B</td>
<td>Discipline, including adjudication, IEP, sanctions</td>
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<td>C</td>
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ANNEX A: IMB SURVEY OF RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

A.1 Between 24 May and 25 July 2017, the IMB conducted a monitoring exercise of prisoners scheduled for release in the next few weeks. The monitoring started about a week later than a similar exercise in 2016 and asked the same questions. We talked to 68 men, slightly under half of those released in the period. Two more men were interviewed but were unwilling to give information. All interviewees were Category C prisoners.

A.2 Board members asked three specific questions:
- Have you seen someone about your resettlement needs
- Do you have accommodation on release
- Do you have work/training on release

A.3 Summary Table

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Numbers do not sum because of queries/uncertainties. These are explained below.

Figures in brackets are comparisons from the 2016 survey when 62 men were interviewed of the 111 released. Of these:
* includes 5 ‘don’t know/didn’t answer
± not including 3 who didn’t answer
§ an additional 10 men didn’t answer

A.4 The CRC monthly reports for May, June and July all say that there was ‘an increased decline’ in seeing clients, possibly because of staff shortages on the wings or the absence of prisoners from the wings at other activities. This made it less likely for men to be seen 12 weeks before release so that their needs could be assessed and actioned. These three reports also say that ‘mostly, everyone was seen prior to release’. Exceptions were men transferred into Brixton less than 12 weeks before release; if HDC release came through quickly without the CRC’s knowledge (this could happen if the man’s
accommodation was cleared more quickly than usual after HDC was awarded); or if the Parole Board directed immediate release.

A.5 The CRC figures are not directly comparable with the IMB's which derive from a shorter period. However, the CRC reports from June and July have the same numbers seen and released and are identical in some other respects – for instance in the number of men going out with no housing (NFA). The total NFA for the three months was 46, with another 8 having a housing appointment to follow up on release. The CRC had no complaints in the three months and prisoner feedback forms were often not filled in or lost.

A.6 About a third of the men surveyed by IMB in 2017, as in 2016, said that they had not been seen by anyone. Only one said that he did not need help with resettlement. Two of the 20 'not seen' men said that they had one night's accommodation arranged on release. This implies that they had been seen by St Mungo's, which is part of the CRC. Another said that he had been seen by NACRO, possibly a mistake for CRC. Some men who acknowledged being contacted said that they had been seen by Probation rather than the CRC. This could be correct, depending on their sentence. Others credited Job Centre Plus, and several had been seen by RAPt, which also works with the CRC. Two men had seen mental health workers and two mentioned Bounce Back. Seven men found their contact helpful – five not.

A.7 39 men had housing to go to on release, two-thirds with family or in their own place. Seven of these 39 men had only temporary accommodation. It would appear that the CRC found 'not temporary' accommodation for only six men. One man was waiting for confirmation, another did not know whether he had fallen into arrears with the flat he rented, despite trying to pay. Three men said that they intended to return to their family home if they were not detained by immigration.

A.8 Six men were definitely going to approved premises and seven expected 'to get an address from probation' or had an appointment with St Mungo’s. There is a shortage of approved premises in London so some men may not get a place or be offered one outside London. Where there is a Parole Board requirement, a man will not be released unless he has a hostel place. One man didn't know if he would be released the following week because he was waiting for an approved premises place.

A.9 15 men had nowhere to go. One of these was hoping the council would give him a place because he had cancer, and another was mentally ill but had no housing set up. One man said that he had not seen his offender manager for two years and was unsure how he would report to the police if he had no address. Another was worried because it was the first time he had left prison without housing, and one man was 'very low' because it was his seventh time leaving prison with nowhere to live. He said, 'it gets me back in trouble every time'. He had approached St Mungo’s and RAPt but at that point without success.

A.10 18 of the men who had either no housing or temporary housing had no job either. By contrast, 13 of the men who were going out to family accommodation also had a job or were confident of getting one, for instance because they had a scaffolding qualification. In some cases, a family member had set up the job for them.
Additionally, eight men reported that they had been helped to open a bank account before being released.

The IMB monitoring results for housing are no less disappointing for 2017 than for 2016. They are significantly better for jobs and training, where a number of agencies were involved as well as the CRC. Some men had got jobs through the Prison Reform Trust Out for Good programme.

It is particularly disappointing that the men with the least help outside – no family, no job – seem to get little effective support. Without housing, which is not in the CRC’s power to supply, they are unlikely to find work and more likely to be in the revolving door ‘getting back in trouble every time’.