



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at
HMP & YOI Wormwood Scrubs

for reporting year
1 June 2016 to 31 May 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 is situated.

The Board is specifically charged with:

- (1) satisfying 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) informing promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) **reporting 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 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 When the Board published its report last year, Wormwood Scrubs was recovering from a period of chaos. The prison had been running an emergency regime, with many aspects of prison life disrupted by the lack of staff.
- 2.2 The Board is pleased to report that the prison has made real progress this year, and outcomes for prisoners have improved; however, progress has been slow and frequently held back as a result of staff shortages and cross-deployment. There are still very serious problems to be addressed.
- 2.3 Wormwood Scrubs remains a dangerous environment for staff and prisoners alike, with multiple violent incidents on most days.
- 2.4 In July, the prison's performance rating changed from 1 (the worst rating) to 2. Nevertheless, important functions such as the prison's reception continued to suffer from cross-deployment of staff.
- 2.5 On 8 July, staff held a union meeting outside the prison; they returned to work at 9am and there was no serious disruption to the regime.
- 2.6 In October, the prison's management and the POA union agreed on benchmark figures for the numbers of staff on duty, and the change to the new regime took place on 20 November. To help with this transition, the prison was given an additional 10 officers per week, for the first 3 months.
- 2.7 Despite this, the actual number of staff has fluctuated from week to week, but has steadily decreased. Over the course of the year, 57 prison officers left but only 21 were replaced and the prison has been unable to operate at the benchmark level.
- 2.8 Unfortunately, on 15 November, prison staff across England and Wales withdrew from work. At Wormwood Scrubs, there was some disruption for the rest of the day; seven incoming prisoners were not screened before they moved to the wings. The prison was also unable to assist with the disorder that broke out at HMYOI Aylesbury the following day.
- 2.9 The transition to the new regime had some teething troubles, but there were no significant problems. An officer was detailed to walk through the prison looking for prisoners who had ended up in the wrong place each day, but this role was used more to gather data than to solve difficulties when they occurred. Prisoners across several wings avoided work because they didn't trust that there would be association in the evening.
- 2.10 The new regime also included a Regime Management Plan, which specifies exactly how the regime operates depending on how many staff are available, leading to a more predictable experience for both staff and prisoners. While the introduction of the plan is a positive step, it does not change the number of staff available; by the end of the year, the plan was regularly at amber/red status, and could only operate at amber/green by removing staff from safer custody and drug testing work.
- 2.11 On 1 April, management of prisons in England and Wales transferred to HMPPS (Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service). Later that month, a general election was called and the government abandoned the Prisons and Courts Bill.

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated justly?

- 2.12 The Board is concerned that complaints made by prisoners are sometimes handled inappropriately, or passed to the staff member who is the subject of the complaint. This affects both the prison complaints system and also the separate healthcare complaints system (5.6, 8.11).
- 2.13 Wormwood Scrubs is considered by legal professionals who visit custodial establishments to be the most difficult prison in London for them to access. Both the booking system for legal visits and the experience of professional visitors when they arrive at the gate are unacceptably poor. In effect, prisoners – some of who are awaiting trial for very serious charges – are not sufficiently able to access legal advice. There is a serious risk that the courts are in turn affected by the problems experienced by lawyers who are unable to see their clients (5.10–5.14).
- 2.14 Throughout the year, the Board found prisoners in the First Night Centre and other areas who were removed from association according to rule 45 of the Prison Rules, but who were not subject to the usual procedural safeguards (6.7–6.8). While the Board acknowledges that Wormwood Scrubs has concrete plans to remedy this situation, at the end of the reporting year those plans had not yet been put into action.

Are prisoners treated humanely?

- 2.15 The Board has generally observed that staff have a positive attitude towards prisoners, although they do not always have the time to engage with them as much as they could. Too often, shortages of basic items such as kettles mean that staff are unable to satisfy the requests that prisoners routinely make (7.13). This causes a sense of frustration among prisoners and contributes to the volatile atmosphere.
- 2.16 The lack of maintenance in the prison means that prisoners are frequently subjected to conditions that are indecent and not suitable for them to live in (7.2–7.3).
- 2.17 Prisoners continue to experience unacceptable delays in accessing medical treatment outside the prison (8.1–8.3).
- 2.18 The Board remains concerned that Care UK is not always able to provide enough staff to deliver the reception triage and screening process (8.4).

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

- 2.19 There are significant problems in the work of the OMU (Offender Management Unit), which has been seriously under-resourced. A large backlog of OASys (Offender Assessment System) assessments has built up, and this damages prisoners' prospects of success before the Parole Board (11.1–11.2). Sentence calculations are not checked when they should be, with the associated risk that prisoners may be released too early or too late (11.5–11.6). The Board's most common source of applications from prisoners this year has been about the work of the OMU.
- 2.20 The work of the CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company) has improved, but it is still the case that they could engage more meaningfully with prisoners if they were able to see them earlier (11.7–11.10). Far too many prisoners are released without having received any effective help with accommodation (11.11).

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

- 2.21 The Board wishes to bring to the attention of the Minister that prisoners' access to effective legal representation is being severely hampered by the operation of the legal visits system (5.10–5.14).
- 2.22 Wormwood Scrubs is consistently operating with staff shortages and is generally unable to offer a full regime to prisoners. The lack of staff is seriously curtailing work on safer custody and offender management. Can the Minister say what plans will be put in place to improve staff recruitment and, equally importantly, staff retention?
- 2.23 The Board also wishes to make the Minister aware of the performance of Carillion, the organisation contracted for maintenance services to the prison. Carillion are not able to adequately maintain the fabric of the prison. Managers and officers are expected to work – and prisoners are expected to live – in unacceptable conditions, which are not only indecent but also represent a threat to the security of the prison (7.2–7.5). Carillion does not make use of trustworthy prisoners who have the skills to help them and would benefit from the work (7.7). The Board also finds that the data gathered by Carillion on complaints does not reflect the reality of what is happening (7.6).

TO THE PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE

- 2.24 Wormwood Scrubs does not currently have the capacity to engage in sufficient violence reduction work or to reduce gang-related violence (4.3–4.4). In addition, there are not always enough local or regional resources to combat the flow of drugs into the prison (4.13).
- 2.25 The prison also continues to struggle with accessing common items of kit, such as clean clothing and radios. Requests made to the central stores are not met with a timely or adequate supply of goods (7.13).
- 2.26 The Board is pleased to note that Wormwood Scrubs moved from level 1 to a sustained period at level 2 (2.4). However, the Board notes that this score is calculated from a number of differently weighted statistics, and is concerned that this might lead prisons to prioritise work that improves their score rather than the lives of prisoners.
- 2.27 The Board has seen a significant increase in the number of applications it receives about transfers between prisons. Too many prisoners in the Segregation Unit are held in an unsuitable environment because of the difficulty in arranging a transfer (6.6). The Board has also encountered prisoners who do not wish to be near London (perhaps to be near family, or to avoid a former gang), but are unable to relocate because HMPPS population management will only allow transfers within the region.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- 2.28 The Board is concerned that prisoners arriving at Wormwood Scrubs are subject to full searching which is not consistent with HMPPS policy and may not be justified (5.9).
- 2.29 Despite the improvements to purposeful activity places, there are still too many prisoners receiving limited association and spending most of their day locked in their cells (10.4).

Improvements

- 2.30 The increased use of CCTV within the prison (and plans to install more) has had a positive effect on safety (4.15).
- 2.31 The new system for prisoners to access their stored property has been successful, and represents a significant improvement on the previous situation (7.9).
- 2.32 Early indications are that the new regime has brought some of the benefits expected for those prisoners who are engaged in work activities during the day (10.4).
- 2.33 The “prisoner information points” on the wings are a welcome development, provided that they are managed appropriately (7.15).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

- 3.1 HMP Wormwood Scrubs was built between 1875 and 1891. It is a Category B local male prison and young offender institution. It accepts both sentenced and remand prisoners over the age of 21 and Young Adults (those aged 18–21) on remand, both groups coming from its catchment area. It is a designated resettlement prison and has an operational capacity of 1,279. During the reporting year, the prison population has generally been close to the available capacity.
- 3.2 About 45% of the prisoner population is on remand. The religious breakdown of prisoners at the end of the year was: Roman Catholic, 270; Church of England, 115; Muslim, 363; Other Christian, 123; No religion, 185.
- 3.3 The establishment has five main wings, housing between 144 and 317 prisoners. Two of the wings offer single-cell accommodation. The First Night Centre holds up to 34 prisoners, usually for one night.
- 3.4 There is also a 55-place detoxification unit (the Conibeere Unit) and a residential Healthcare Centre with 17 beds.
- 3.5 There are on average 95 prisoners aged 50–59 and 30 prisoners aged over 60. This represents a notable increase compared to the previous year.
- 3.6 Education and training for prisoners is delivered by Novus, healthcare is delivered by Care UK, and maintenance is delivered by Carillion.
- 3.7 The Community Rehabilitation Company is MTCNovo.

4 SAFETY

- 4.1 There have been serious efforts made to combat some of the factors affecting safety at Wormwood Scrubs, but unfortunately it remains a dangerous place, with 40–50 violent incidents occurring in a typical month. This includes assaults on both prisoners and staff; the latter is more common than at comparator prisons. As in previous years, Young Adults seem to be involved in proportionally more violence than their numbers would suggest.
- 4.2 In the first part of the year, there was an increase in the use of force, as well as incidents in which staff had drawn their batons. The Board was not sure that the use of force was always justified, a concern that was explored by the prison's Safer Custody meetings. There has been a move by the prison to be more robust about requiring full reports by staff involved in the use of force.
- 4.3 Early in the year, cross-deployment of staff had effectively stopped any work on violence reduction or liaising with police to tackle gang activity. A violence reduction audit in January was rated amber/red.
- 4.4 25% of violent incidents are gang-related, and it is disappointing that more is not done to disrupt gangs.
- 4.5 In September, there were 27 violent incidents that did not result in a prisoner being put on the Basic regime. Staff told the Board that putting a prisoner on Basic is time-consuming, but does not result in any meaningful loss for the prisoner.
- 4.6 Wormwood Scrubs has repeatedly taken in challenging prisoners following disturbances at other prisons. Throughout the year there were serious incidents across the country, including at HMP Birmingham and HMP Bedford which increased pressure on the prison system as a whole because some accommodation was left unusable. Prisoners who arrive at Wormwood Scrubs following these incidents are often unhappy at being moved to another part of the country, away from family, and this is not helped by the difficulty faced by staff in trying to arrange transfers.
- 4.7 Between September and December, the prison reported a medium risk of disorder as a result of receiving disruptive prisoners, as well as taking prisoners from other establishments that had reached their capacity. In 2016, Wormwood Scrubs received the second highest number of prisoners moved by "Tornado teams" following disturbances.
- 4.8 Throughout the year, Safer Custody has been affected by cross-deployment of staff. At times the department has been closed and has not attended SRBs (Segregation Review Boards).
- 4.9 In July, the Board observed a prisoner on constant watch, after he had been cut free from a ligature earlier in the day. The prisoner was lying on the floor of his toilet, while a nurse watched his empty bed without attempting to engage with him. This did not appear to be an effective way of managing a prisoner in severe distress.
- 4.10 The holding rooms in reception remain stark, and prisoners spend too many hours there with little to occupy them.
- 4.11 The Board regrets that there were 3 deaths in custody during the year. Sadly, a fourth prisoner also died overnight on the last day of the Board's reporting year. This will be included in the following year's report.

- 4.12 Last year, the Board expressed its concerns about the treatment of newly arrived prisoners who required detoxification. Unfortunately, the same concerns were raised again during the investigation of one of the deaths that occurred.
- 4.13 The supply of drugs continues to be a major problem for the prison and tackling this has been hampered by a lack of resources. In August only 12 of 30 MDTs (Mandatory Drug Tests) were carried out because of staff shortages and in March, a planned night search was cancelled due to a lack of availability from the regional dog team. At the end of the year, the prison was preparing to introduce new tests for "Spice".
- 4.14 There have been some successes as well. The prison secured funding for more cameras, both CCTV and body-worn, as well as additional money to be used for safety improvements.
- 4.15 CCTV was installed on C Wing in May and appears to have reduced the levels of violence, although there are still concerns that incidents may be occurring more inside cells.
- 4.16 The use of body-worn cameras began in December. In the first two weeks, two prisoners were arrested as a result of the video evidence. It is still early days, and the Board will observe how the cameras are used, but they have the potential to improve safety and reduce violence.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

- 5.1 The prison generally works hard to treat different groups of prisoners fairly. When this breaks down, it is generally an unintended consequence of changes to the day-to-day running of activities. For example, the scheduling of both legal visits and afternoon access to the showers caused difficulty at times for Muslim prisoners who found that these activities clashed with Friday prayers.
- 5.2 There are, on average, around 390 foreign nationals held in the prison. Of those, 40–50 are immigration detainees, held under executive powers and not serving a prison sentence. The Board repeats its view that Wormwood Scrubs is not an appropriate place for immigration detainees.
- 5.3 The First Night Centre holds a good collection of basic information about life in custody in a range of languages. However, information about complaints procedures is not always available in languages other than English.
- 5.4 There were occasional complaints from prisoner representatives that halal and non-halal kitchen equipment was not adequately separated. Halal food is available, but does not always appear as appetising as the other options. The Board was satisfied with the provisions made for food during Ramadan.
- 5.5 The prison secured funding during the year for a disabled cell and wet room.
- 5.6 The Board has been concerned on more than one occasion that complaints about staff have been handled inappropriately or have been revealed to the staff member concerned, including both first-stage (Comp 1) and second-stage (Comp 1A) complaints.
- 5.7 Prisoners often express a lack of trust in the complaints system, and the Board has monitored the backlog of complaints, which the prison has made efforts to address. In January, there were complaints dating back to the previous April; by March, the oldest complaint was from the previous November, with only 15 more complaints from before March itself.
- 5.8 The Board finds that prisoners are paid for each day's work, but that they do not receive the pay into their accounts in a steady manner. This leads to a situation where prisoners are unable to budget for items they wish to purchase during the week. Additionally, they may find their entire canteen order is not processed because they have overspent by a small amount, even though there is more money waiting to be credited to them. The Board believes that the system by which prisoners' attendance at activities is confirmed and their pay processed is unnecessarily complex.
- 5.9 All prisoners arriving at Wormwood Scrubs undergo a full search, even when they have come directly from another prison and have already been searched on their departure. The Board believes that this level of searching is not justified. HMPPS policy only requires a rub-down search unless there is intelligence or reasonable suspicion that an item will be revealed by a full search.
- 5.10 The Board has become seriously concerned by the operation of legal visits. Several solicitors have provided the Board with evidence of their experiences booking and attending legal visits, and have stated that Wormwood Scrubs is significantly worse in this respect than other similar prisons.
- 5.11 Solicitor X repeatedly requested access to see his client, Mr A, but was told that Mr A was not at Wormwood Scrubs, although his family visited him there. The prison also held an incorrect date of birth for Mr A but was unable to change it. Solicitor X was unable to complain because nobody ever answered the phone.

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| <p>5.12 Solicitor Y requested a booking on January 10, for a visit on January 17. On the date of the visit, the prison responded to say that it was now too late to book. The solicitor immediately requested January 24, and the email was read the same day but had not received a response by January 24. The solicitor then requested January 31, and the email was again read the same day but not replied to until January 30, by which time the visit was no longer available.</p> |
| <p>5.13 Solicitor Z described the booking system as “shambolic”. She found conflicting information about how to book, and two different phone numbers for confirming visits were engaged all day. She was given three different sets of instruction for getting authorisation to bring a laptop. The biometric registration system failed on two consecutive days.</p> |
- 5.14 In addition to the significant problems with the booking system, solicitors have told the Board that procedures when they arrive at the prison are so poor that they spend much of their visit gaining entry to the visits area. One solicitor had a 2-hour conference reduced to 45 minutes. One of the main functions of Wormwood Scrubs is to hold people who are awaiting trial or other court appearances; these prisoners are effectively being denied access to legal advice.

6 SEGREGATION UNIT

- 6.1 The Segregation Unit comprises 18 single cells located on the upper floor, and two special cells (bare rooms with CCTV cameras in the corners) on the ground floor. There is a small exercise yard, shared with the Conibeere Unit.
- 6.2 The general standard of cleanliness is good and the unit's officers do a good job of managing some very challenging prisoners. The overall atmosphere of the unit tends to be supportive.
- 6.3 In February, the exercise yard was dug up for maintenance. Prisoners in the Segregation Unit had no outdoor exercise for a week.
- 6.4 SRBs are held weekly and newly segregated prisoners are reviewed within 72 hours. Board members have occasionally reported that SRBs have taken place without a member of healthcare staff. Prisoners are sometimes absent from their own SRB if their behaviour makes it unsafe for them to attend; the Board has found isolated cases where this absence was not justified (e.g. where the prisoner was engaged in a videolink hearing at the same time as the SRB).
- 6.5 Attempts by the prison to schedule SRBs at a fixed time each week have not been entirely successful throughout the year, with the result that too many SRBs take place in the absence of a Board member.
- 6.6 Prisoners are sometimes segregated for too long because a more suitable place can't be found for them in another prison, often despite the best efforts of staff to arrange a transfer.
- 6.7 Last year, the Board reported that vulnerable prisoners were being placed in the First Night Centre as "lodgers". This situation has continued to concern the Board throughout the year. Not only do these prisoners receive a limited regime, but they are not managed by the Segregation Unit staff and therefore not subject to regular reviews.
- 6.8 In September, the Board found 9 prisoners in the First Night Centre who were under Rule 45 but not included in the procedural safeguards that go with this status.
- 6.9 There have been improvements to the arrangements for adjudications; officers can now use the phone rather than having to leave their duties to give evidence. The Independent Adjudicator now attends twice a month. However, it remains the case that too many adjudications are ineffective or "time out".

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

- 7.1 There have been efforts during the year to improve the physical condition of the more stark areas of the prison. Work began on painting the visits hall, which has made it a more welcoming environment, and the central “spine link” corridor now has more posters and artwork.
- 7.2 The external areas of the prison are frequently dirty, with rubbish blowing around the courtyard and piles of rotting food attracting rats.
- 7.3 Carillion, the maintenance contractor, is unable to deliver the service required. Over the course of the year, the Board found:
- Beds in poor condition
 - Privacy curtains in B Wing not fixed after 6 months
 - Kitchen phone broken for over a month
 - A prisoner had a broken toilet for over a week
 - Unheated cells during winter
 - Staff working in the visits foyer in overcoats and scarves
 - No working urinals in the visits holding room and the floor covered in water (reported in September and still broken in January)
 - 34 out of 80 visitors’ lockers broken
 - A Wing lift not working
- 7.4 The window replacement programme was expected to begin in November, but was then postponed because the first 100 windows were the wrong size. The Board notes that the same problem had occurred at HMP Pentonville. By December, 30 windows had been installed on the outside of D4 (a hotspot for packages being thrown into the prison). Some of the windows at ground level are little more than shards of plastic, either broken in their frames or lying on the ground.
- 7.5 In the visits hall, there were plans to move the shop upstairs (so that prisoners could choose what they wanted) and to paint the hall. Carillion was unable to provide the effort needed and painting proceeded slowly. A new mural was painted by a prisoner.
- 7.6 Staff and prisoners alike have complained regularly to the Board that they report maintenance problems but do not expect any action to result. Carillion has stated that they received very few formal complaints under their contractual complaints mechanism.
- 7.7 There is a sense of frustration that Carillion is unable to maintain the fabric of the prison, while there are prisoners with the necessary skills locked behind their cell doors.
- 7.8 In May, there was a fire inspection by CPFIG (Crown Premises Fire Inspection Group). The inspection found insufficient fire-fighting equipment (although the prison has now replaced much of this equipment) and fire response plans could not be achieved in some circumstances. More than 600 emergency lights had failed at the time of the previous inspection in 2015, and fewer than half of them had been repaired. Multiple fire hoses had been defective for some time.
- 7.9 During the year, the prison introduced a new system for prisoners to get access to their stored property, beginning with those who had been waiting the longest. Both the Board and the prison have seen a fall in the number of property complaints, and the system appears to be working well. However, complaints about property lost in transit have continued.

7.10 Mr B told the Board that he had made a complaint about his property, including photos of his family, which had not been sent from HMP Swaleside. The complaints department could not find any record of this, even though a Board member was able to produce a copy of the written complaint, which had been answered in November 2015. Despite Wormwood Scrubs staff repeatedly chasing the matter, Mr B's property was still missing in July 2016.

7.11 Staff shortages mean that it is not always possible for the cell clearance procedure to be carried out correctly.

7.12 The Board has observed prisoners' meals throughout the year. The quality is variable, but portions are often insufficient, particularly for young adults. The budget at the start of the year was £1.90 per day. Prisoners said that they sometimes found stale baguettes or mouldy cheese, and would throw these out of the window, which contributed to the rat problem.

7.13 There are often shortages of basic items, such as radios and kettles. The prison also struggles to obtain enough prison-issue clothing from the central stores.

7.14 There have been problems with incoming post – letters sometimes arriving months too late – and canteen. Prisoners who attend court do not get a canteen sheet unless they take action to say that they will be returning to prison; this is not well known by prisoners, who are more likely to complain or get into debt when they get no canteen.

7.15 In the later half of the year, “prisoner information points” were introduced, with knowledgeable prisoners providing help and guidance to their peers. This has proved to be helpful for both staff and prisoners, although the Board is concerned that allowing prisoners to handle applications could lead to a breach of confidentiality.

7.16 At the start of the year, the system for booking visits changed. Prisoners no longer booked their own visits on paper, but visitors could book online or by phone. Visitors frequently said that they had experienced problems with the online booking system. In September, the central booking system stopped for social visits and booking returned under the control of the prison.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 The quality of clinical care is generally acceptable. However, there are frequent problems in getting prisoners to appointments. At the start of the year, 34% of appointments were cancelled and the Board does not consider that prisoners receive the same access to medical care as they would in the community.

8.2	Mr C had a broken knee and had been waiting for surgery since October 2015. His operation was cancelled as no officers were available to escort him.
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8.3	Mr D had a broken arm and had been waiting for further treatment since November 2015. The healthcare team were aware of his case, but no progress was being made.
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8.4 Problems with healthcare for newly arrived prisoners have continued. The prison introduced a new triage service for reception, but Care UK is not always able to guarantee enough staff to deliver it, resulting in late-night or missed screening in the First Night Centre. There remains a risk that a new prisoner with serious health concerns will not be seen during his first day.

8.5 In March, the Board observed a prisoner in the First Night Centre who was distressed because the lower part of his ear was almost severed. A nurse was available, but there were not enough officers present to unlock the prisoner.

8.6 There have also been delays in medication following prisoners as they move around the prison as a result of differences between HMPPS and Care UK computer systems.

8.7 The lack of available staff sometimes means that prisoners in the Healthcare Centre receive a limited regime, with insufficient access to therapies and association. The lack of time out of cell has the effect of intensifying prisoners' mental health problems.

8.8 Last year, the Board reported that an X-ray machine had never worked despite being purchased over 8 years previously. The X-ray machine is still not in service.

8.9 Although it is not as prevalent as in similar prisons, "Spice" has been a continued challenge for healthcare staff. In July, a prisoner required care for 10 days as a result of taking "Spice".

8.10 The Board still receives complaints about the attitude of some nurses, and has witnessed behaviour that could be perceived by prisoners as discourteous or uncaring.

8.11 Healthcare complaints are handled separately to other prison complaints, and complaint forms are not always available. In some cases, prisoners wishing to complain about a nurse have had to approach the same nurse to request a complaint form, and believed that they had been punished for doing so.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 9.1 During the earlier part of the year, attendance at education was poor. In June, 75 places out of 310 at wing classes were attended (a rate of 24%). In August, 476 places at education sessions were cancelled because Novus staff were unavailable; just under half the available places were used.
- 9.2 There were also problems with access to education as a knock-on effect of other challenges to the regime. For example, when the First Night Centre ran out of space, new prisoners would have to be located elsewhere in the prison and would get bypassed for the assessments needed before they could go to education.
- 9.3 Changes to the regime have had a positive effect, and attendance had improved to a consistent 91% by April.
- 9.4 In September, the alarm system in the library stopped working and the library was closed until Carillion could fix it. After 4 weeks, one of the library staff was trained to carry a radio and the library was able to function while she was present. The alarm was still not fixed by the end of December.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

- 10.1 The prison operates a number of work activities, and was preparing to open more workshops at the end of the year.
- 10.2 The Board is generally satisfied that the activities are chosen to give prisoners some meaningful skills. The managers responsible for workshops have rejected some training and activity opportunities that would not be likely to benefit prisoners after their release.
- 10.3 Attendance at the laundry has improved and even reached 100% in August. However, other activities are often under-occupied if there are not enough staff available to run them.
- 10.4 Overall, there has been an improvement in the provision of purposeful activity places for prisoners, and the Board hopes to see more progress in the following year. Although attendance has been good in certain areas, there are still too many prisoners not getting to a purposeful activity during the day; with association often reduced to less than an hour per session, these prisoners can spend almost an entire day locked in their cells.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

- 11.1 Last year, the Board reported problems in the way prisoners were prepared for release. There had been a significant increase in the number of prisoners released without accommodation and some prisoners were not seen by the CRC before their release date. Staffing shortages meant that the OMU did not run effectively, and there was a serious backlog in OASys assessments.
- 11.2 Unfortunately, there has been little meaningful improvement this year. In June, the backlog of OASys assessments had reached over 200. The OMU had a target of completing 16 assessments each month, but were unable to meet this target because staff were cross-deployed to work on BCST (Basic Custody Screening Tool). In June, the OMU had the equivalent of 3.75 full-time staff to carry out the work of 13.
- 11.3 According to a group of prisoner representatives, the OMU was perceived by prisoners to be one of the worst-performing departments in the prison.
- 11.4 In July, a member of probation staff resigned, leaving the prison with nobody who was able to access the ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offender Register) database for approximately 6 months. This is a serious risk to public protection work.
- 11.5 There is a lack of staff who are trained to carry out sentence calculations and the Board is concerned that prisoners' release dates are not checked in accordance with the schedule laid out in HMPPS policy, or are occasionally found to be incorrect.
- 11.6 The prison does not always receive the necessary information about prisoners who have been recalled, and there is sometimes confusion about prisoners' legal paperwork. This situation creates the potential for prisoners to be unlawfully detained beyond their release date or, as occurred in March, to be released in error.
- 11.7 By July, the CRC was fully staffed and some positive work had begun in certain areas, such as liaising with outside employers and helping prisoners to open bank accounts.
- 11.8 However, the CRC has continued to see prisoners too close to their release dates: in August, prisoners were being seen ahead of their release the same month, and there was no improvement over the course of the year.
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| 11.9 | In August, Mr E told the Board that he was being released in 2 weeks and was worried about how he would get access to benefits. The CRC had not seen him and were unable to say when they would do so. |
| 11.10 | In October, the Board spoke to Mr F, who was being release that day. He had received no help with accommodation and planned to "stay with a mate". The CRC had not yet been to see him, and told the Board that he was on the list for the next day, when he would already have been released. |
- 11.11 Last year, the Board repeated the findings of HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) that the percentage of prisoners who had accommodation on release had fallen from 95% to 59%. By June, this had fallen further to 52%. The availability of data from St Mungo's became sporadic.
- 11.12 Other agencies involved in resettlement work have also been hampered. In June, the National Careers Service saw 260 prisoners, compared to 410 previously. Later in the year, the Board observed their staff conducting a careers interview through the door of a large dormitory.
- 11.13 The CAB (Citizens' Advice Bureau) has been unable to help prisoners who need photo ID because they have no camera available to them. Job Centre Plus has one advisor, but they have to leave the prison and return to their own premises in order to access the Internet. At times this meant that the monthly provision of help fell from 14 days to 6.5 days.

11.14 At the start of the year, 30% of prisoners were receiving help with employment or education; by December, this had fallen to below 18%. In September, only 6 prisoners attended the resettlement workshop out of 15 places available.

C Work of the Board

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	24
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	17
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	17
Total number of visits to the Establishment	467

D Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	24	26
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	6	8
C	Equality	11	7
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	35	44
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	42	46
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	12	24
F	Food and kitchens	14	17
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	80	75
H 1	Property within this establishment	68	71
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	35	51
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	23	21
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	94	56
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	57	70
K	Transfers	44	13
L	Other	65	73
	Total number of IMB applications	610	602