



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at

**HMP Featherstone**

for reporting Year  
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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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### 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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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.

## **Section 2**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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This report presents the findings of the IMB (Independent Monitoring Board) at HMP Featherstone for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017. IMB evidence comes from observations made on prison visits, scrutiny of records and of data, informal contact with prisoners, staff and from prisoner application forms.

Following a damning HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) inspection of the prison, carried out between 24<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, the Chief Inspector raised particular concerns over safety, the poor state of repair of the prison and staffing shortages amongst other things. Those concerns were mirrored and highlighted in previous IMB Annual reports.

In July, we wrote directly to the Prisons Minister expressing our concerns about the very poor state of repair of the prison, not helped by what appeared to be a failing facilities management contract. We regret to say that we did not receive an acknowledgement from the Prisons Minister confirming that he had received our letter. The Board is aware that the Prisons Minister had received our letter because the Governing Governor at HMP Featherstone was asked to comment on it before replying to us. We sent follow up letters on the 20<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> November but to date we have not had the courtesy of a reply.

The Board is concerned about the ingress of drugs, mobile phones, sim cards, and tobacco that come into the prison in a variety of ways, such as drones, throw-overs, sprayed on paper and brought in by visitors. This is a nationwide problem and certainly not unique to Featherstone. Clearly, the consequences of taking NPS (new psychoactive substance) could be extremely serious and possibly fatal for some. The Board are alarmed at the frequency of incidents and the numbers of personnel involved who have to deal with these matters, including outside agencies such as the Ambulance service. The sale of illegal items is big business in prisons and this often results in some prisoners spiralling into debt, bullying, assaults and for some self-isolation. A terrible waste of manpower and resources!

In response to the HMIP report, the Governing Governor and his senior management team have implemented strategies, to help reduce violence within the establishment and make Featherstone a safe and decent place in which to live and work. In addition, an increase in staffing has significantly helped, although it has to be said, many of the new prison officers, are, as you would expect, lacking in initial experience but very enthusiastic and eager. The general mood within the prison has improved and the relationships between prisoners and staff are significantly better.

### **Main Judgements**

#### **Are prisoners treated fairly?**

Overall, prisoners receive fair treatment at HMP Featherstone. A number of initiatives have been introduced this year which have made a notable difference.

- One of them was the involvement of "User Voice" (a unique organisation run and led by ex-offenders), in the formation of the Prison Council. The Prison Council is a group of elected prisoners, who represent the wider prison community and whose goal is, to make prison life better for everyone. They talk to others in prison to find out about their good and bad experiences, and ideas of how to improve the service that they are receiving. From this information they create and present proposals to the decision makers, offering positive solutions to current relevant prison issues. This is an opportunity for prisoners to contribute to the way they are treated by working closely with prison staff to create a better environment for all.

The benefits are that it provides an opportunity to make a difference to the lives of other prisoners; it stimulates empowerment and confidence and provides an opportunity to learn new skills which could be used on release. For the council member, it can provide a great sense of reward and achievement, when you see put in place, changes that you have worked on with fellow council members.

- August saw the expansion of prisoners wearing their own clothes and the implementation of the no smoking policy. With the improvement in staffing numbers, it has meant that there is more time to engage with prisoners and make a difference. There were concerns that the implementation of the no smoking policy might lead to prisoner unrest, however, this proved not to be the case.
- There was an issue regarding the cancellation of hospital appointments earlier in the year due to escorts not being available because of a shortage of staff for various reasons. This has improved and is now much better.
- On occasions, prisoners and staff have expressed their frustrations to us about their inability to obtain both essential basic supplies and suitable kit. Systems have now been put in place, hopefully to address this problem.

### **Are prisoners treated humanely?**

On the one hand, we have seen a marked improvement in the number of prison officers and this in turn has led to improvements in the relationships between prisoners and staff. There is also a much clearer understanding by staff of them doing the right thing and the reasoning behind why they do it. The atmosphere around the prison is noticeably better and there is, in general, a culture of mutual respect for one another. We hope this continues.

On the other hand, we are seriously concerned about the very poor living conditions that some prisoners have to endure. The Board feels that for some, the conditions are totally unacceptable and unfit for purpose. The prison is now over forty years old and is in urgent need of major refurbishment and repair, if not complete rebuilding of some areas. Many of the cell windows need replacing and are a security risk, the majority of showers are disgraceful and a significant number of cells are out of action for far too long. Parts of the prison are shabby and in urgent need of decoration. Many of these failings are as a result of a poorly performing national facilities management contract.

During the course of the year, it has been noted on many occasions in the course of carrying out our Rota reports, how rubbish is constantly deposited by prisoners outside cell windows, particularly on Houses 1-4. This problem has been brought to the Governors' attention on numerous occasions and prisoner work parties do clear it up but the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved and is an ongoing issue. Some action to address this problem was taken towards the end of the reporting period. Individual house blocks need to take responsibility for the cleanliness of their own areas and instil a sense of ownership and pride in keeping them clean and tidy. Apart from it looking very bad, there could be potential health risks attached, as a direct consequence. Rats and mice are evident around the site and despite all the best efforts of Rentokil, the problem still persists. First impressions do matter and Featherstone needs to address some of these issues.

### **Are prisoners prepared well for their release?**

Overall, we would say yes but there are areas that could be improved. The Board believes offender management is better than it was but communication and joint working with resettlement could still be improved. There has been a significant reduction in the number of outstanding OASys

(Offender Assessment System Assessments). There are still issues regarding OASys not following the prisoner from their previous establishment.

Generally, sentence planning has improved and is quality assured. Pathways to reducing reoffending are for the most part addressed effectively. We believe that the advice and assistance available to prisoners prior to release is good, although some prisoners might disagree.

The Board considers that the cooperation between Probation Services and the CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company) is generally good. HMP Featherstone currently does do ROTL (Release on Temporary License) when it is appropriate. Eligibility is a factor. HDC (Home Detention Curfew) and Cat D reviews are going well. Family links are encouraged and both the Visits Hall and the Visitor Centre provide pleasant, welcoming areas. Family days provide opportunities for ties with relatives to be strengthened.

Progress is being made in the use of the virtual campus (internet access for prisoners to community education, training and employment opportunities) to help with electronic CV (Curriculum Vitae) preparation and support "live" job searches and applications.

An average of 30 prisoners a month are being released and averages of 24 resettlement plans have being completed. The shortfall appears to be down to difficulties in communication between the CRC and OMU (Offender Management Unit) but hopefully this will improve.

### **Main areas for Development**

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

The Board has expressed its concerns in previous Annual Reports about the generally poor state of buildings and fabric at HMP Featherstone. The HMIP report in 2016 only echoed and reinforced what we have been saying for some years. We subsequently wrote to you in July reaffirming our concerns in the hope that some action would be taken.

- Many of the cell windows in the House units are simply not fit for purpose. Drugs can easily be accessed through the windows, via drones.
- The Kitchen is very tired and dated and is showing signs of its age and usage over time. Frequently, kitchen equipment breaks down and either needs repairing or replacing. The time taken for this to be done is far too long and totally unacceptable.
- Showers on many House units are generally in a disgraceful condition and should, as a matter of urgency, be refurbished or replaced.
- Many of these failings are as a result of a poorly performing national facilities management contract.

The Board does not consider that many of the prisoners at HMP Featherstone are living in acceptable living conditions and in our opinion, urgent, major investment is required to bring the establishment up to twenty first century standards.

We believe that if something is not done urgently there could be serious health, safety and security implications.

**(Paragraph 3 of Page 4 of Executive Summary, Page 5, Page 19/6.6, Page 20/7.5, Page 20/7.6, Page 20/7.7, Page 20/7.9, Page 21/7.10, Page 21/7.13, Page 21/7.14, Page 21/7.16, Page 26/10.5, Page 30)**

## TO THE PRISON SERVICE

The Board has had major concerns over the reporting period regarding the unacceptable time taken by maintenance contractors and suppliers to repair/replace equipment that has broken down. It is constantly reported by our members in weekly rota reports.

The knock on effect for both prisoners and staff cannot be underestimated. More and more time is taken chasing up repairs/replacements and less and less time is spent in more productive ways. This issue is a nationwide one and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The same issue crops up year after year in IMB annual reports across the country but little seems to be done to improve what is a failing service.

The Board have no doubt that this is mainly as a result of a poorly performing national facilities management contract.

The Board is alarmed at the number of cells out of use and the time taken to get them back into use. With the national prison population increasing and the pressures on existing prison establishments, surely it should be a priority to get these "out of use" cells, operational as a matter of urgency?

The Board would like to know what is being done to address these problems.

**(Page 4/Para 3 of Executive Summary, Page 5, Page 9, Page 14/5.4, Page 17/5.12, Page 17/5.13, Page 19/6.6, Page 20/7.5, Page 20/7.6, Page 20/7.7, Page 20/7.9, Page 21/7.10, Page 21/7.13, Page 21/7.14, Page 21/7.16, Page 26/10.5)**

## TO THE GOVERNOR

- The Board has been very disappointed, that despite reporting it many times, there is still an ongoing problem over the rubbish that is discarded from cell windows by prisoners on a number of house units. We do acknowledge that some steps have been taken to address this issue, including the fitting of window restrictors. Litter not only looks very unsightly but inevitably attracts vermin. Mice and rats have been seen by prison staff, prisoners and members of the Board on occasions. Litter removal and vermin control must remain a top priority for the establishment.
- We would also like to see more prisoners out painting across the establishment. This does happen to some degree but we believe it could be extended even further. It cannot be stressed enough what a difference a fresh, clean environment can make to the well being of staff and prisoners alike. It would also give prisoners an opportunity to do purposeful work. A win win situation for everyone, as I am sure you will agree.
- Perhaps the most troubling problem for all prisons, including HMP Featherstone, is the ingress of illegal substances, like drugs, mobile phones, sim cards, tobacco etc; into their establishments. We are satisfied that you are taking active, positive steps to try and prevent this from happening.

The Board were pleased to learn, that following a large scale operation on 31<sup>st</sup> August, in which dozens of police swooped on HMP Featherstone and HMP Oakwood, during visiting hours, five people were arrested for a range of offences including smuggling drugs into a jail. We understand that the high-visibility day of action was conducted to increase public reassurance for those visiting the prisons for lawful purposes and to help protect both prison officers and serving prisoners from harm within. The Board is pleased to learn that these types of operations may be carried out on a regular basis in future.

However, we wondered if, with the improvement in staffing numbers, consideration could be given to more frequent, robust searches around the establishment in the hope of cutting off supply routes. The knock on effect, of illegal substances getting into prisons, has, as you are well aware, huge impacts on the manpower and resources needed to deal with the consequences i.e. Debt, bullying, assaults, and long term health implications not to mention the considerable cost involved in replacing/repairing damaged prison property.

- Over the reporting period the Board has received a number of concerns from both prisoners and staff about the problems of accessing, on occasions, basic supplies like kettles, towels, TV's, toilet rolls, kit, etc. This is not a major problem but does impact significantly on the quality of prisoners' lives. We understand that systems have been put in place to remedy matters. Getting the basics right is essential in dissipating prisoners' frustrations and avoiding potential unrest due to the perception of not being listened to.
- The Board is concerned over the number of cell fires that have occurred over the last 18 months. The numbers of cell fires have declined this year, due to measures that have been put in place but there is still potential for something far more serious to happen and this area of concern should be monitored very closely.

**(Page 4, Para 4 of Executive Summary, Page 5, Page 11/4.1, Page 12/4.5, Page 13/4.12, Page 17/5.12, Page 17/5.13, Page 20/7.8, Page 22/8.7, Page 26/10.12)**

## **IMPROVEMENT-**

The Board has seen noticeable improvements in the reporting year:-

- A noticeable improvement in staff/prisoner relations. The increase in staffing numbers has no doubt helped and contributed to making HMP Featherstone a much happier and safer place in which to live and work. New prison officers may be presently lacking in experience, but make up for it in the enthusiasm and eagerness they display on a day to day basis. The re-introduction of senior officers on wings is warmly welcomed. There is a calmer atmosphere around the prison and a culture of mutual respect is encouraged.
- Additional CCTV (Close Circuit Television) around the establishment and security gates to the Administration block has been added (although not yet completed).
- The wearing of BWVC (Body Worn Video Cameras) has had a positive effect on prisoner's behaviour in general. They have been a useful deterrent, recording incidents when they happen and an invaluable aid in keeping good order and discipline. On occasions, they have even supported a prisoners' case if a charge has been made against him.
- B spur on House 2 has been refurbished and re-equipped to accommodate enhanced prisoners who aspire to move ultimately onto Houses 6 and 7. This now provides better facilities and there is an incentive to live on it.
- HMP Featherstone went no smoking in August. Significant work was carried out in preparing and supporting prisoners to help them stop smoking. The wearing of own clothes was introduced in the same month.
- The introduction of The Prison Council, supported by "User Voice" has been inspirational. It has provided prisoners' representatives, democratically elected, with an opportunity to sit down with the Governor and some of his senior management team and submit proposals to improve life within Featherstone for the better. It has provided prisoners with an opportunity to contribute to the way they are treated by working closely with prison staff to create a better environment for all.
- The continued good work going on with Rail track.

- The improved Listeners scheme and relationship with the Samaritans.
- The excellent work done around self isolators.
- The increase in PEI's (Physical Education Instructors) from 5 to 6.
- The increase in Family visits.
- Horticulture has been re-introduced.
- In January, following a bad environmental health visit, the Kitchen was rated a 2 which is poor. Following improvements, we are pleased to report that the rating went up to 5 in July.
- The FMI (Five Minute Intervention) training programme was rolled out to all staff, including partners and participants are encouraged to use FMI skills in all interactions across the establishment.
- The introduction of initiatives such as Way out TV and Beat in time. Way out TV is an initiative to communicate with prisoners and enhance the potential of giving prisoners extra learning avenues. Beat in time offers music therapy for prisoners.

Looking forward, we understand that amongst other initiatives, there are plans for the replacement of cell windows on some House units. A multi- purpose staff training facility will be available on site. The prison is moving towards Senior Officers on all House units (we understand this may be achieved by the 5<sup>th</sup> November) and we very much welcome this initiative. The Governing Governor is considering making changes to the core day.

### **Section 3**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON**

**Main role** – HMP Featherstone is an adult, male training prison with a resettlement function.

Where prisoners are expected to work, train and be prepared for release in the final part of their sentence. The prison was recategorised in 2015 and serves the Warwickshire and West Mercia area as far as resettlement is concerned. The prison, which opened in 1976, is located approximately 8 miles north of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands and is close to the joining of the M6 and M54 Motorways. It was built on land originally owned by the Ministry of Defence and occupies part of the same land complex as HMP Oakwood and HMP Brinsford.

Since recategorisation, the prison has faced many challenges and has had to adapt accordingly. The type of prisoner population changed and management had to focus and react accordingly in providing those prisoners in their care with work skills (employability) and activities (for instance interventions, education and access to CRC). Since recategorisation, HMP Featherstone has had to deal with many difficult prisoners who have no interest in work or education and their challenging and often aggressive behaviour causes many problems for those front line staff that have to deal with the consequences on a daily basis.

**Category** – HMP Featherstone is a Category C prison. (Category C prisoners are those who have neither the intention nor the resources to escape). Categorisation of prisoners is not, of itself, dependent on the prisoner's offence.

**Performance** – Featherstone is officially a Level 2 prison on the prison rating system.

**Capacity** - It has an OC (Operational capacity) of 603 and a CNA (Certified normal accommodation) of 571 (As at 23/10/17). These figures will be increased by 100 each when House 5 reopens, hopefully in early December 2017.

The operational capacity of a prison is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime. It is determined by the Deputy Director of Custody based on operational judgement and experience.

The certified normal accommodation is the agreed number of prisoners who can be accommodated in a prison (without using single cells for more than one person or double cells with multiple prisoners).

As at 30/10/17 –

- 0% of the population was unsentenced.
- 1 prisoner (0.17%) is serving less than 12 months.
- 168 prisoners (29.12%) serving between 12 months and 4 years.
- 336 prisoners (58.23%) serving longer than 4 years.
- 42 prisoners (7.28%) are lifer prisoners (non IPP)
- 30 prisoners (5.2%) are IPP (imprisonment (or detention) for public protection)

### **Main providers for Healthcare, Education, CRC (Resettlement), Maintenance etc.**

Healthcare – Care UK (since 1/4/16).

Escort Contractor - GeoAmey.

Catering Services – Bidvest.

Education – Milton Keynes College.

CRC – Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company.

Medication – Lloyds Pharmacy Services.

Library Service – Staffordshire Library Service.

Ordering and delivery of canteen items – DHL.

Maintenance – Amey.

In addition there are numerous voluntary organisations that provide invaluable services within the prison.

### **Accommodation and facilities –**

The prison has the following accommodation units.

House 1- A two-storey block. As at 23/10/17 it held 112 prisoners including 3 self isolators.

House 2 – A two-storey block. As at 23/10/17 it held 116 prisoners including 4 self isolators.

House 3 – A two-storey block. As at 23/10/17 it held 111 prisoners including 4 self isolators.

House 4 – A two-story block. As at 23/10/17 it held 110 prisoners including 1 self isolator.

House 5 – A three-storey block. As at 23/10/17 it held no prisoners. Following a serious incident on the 29/8/17, the unit was closed down for repair and refurbishment. It is hoped that it will reopen in early December 2017.

House 6 – A two-storey block. As at 23/10/17 it held 34 prisoners, none of which were self isolators.

House 7 – A two-storey block. As at 23/10/17 it held 76 prisoners, none of which were self isolators.

Segregation Unit – As at 23/10/17 it held 6 prisoners. There are 10 standard cells and a special cell. The Segregation Unit reopened following repair and refurbishment in the spring of 2017.

Additionally, there is a Gymnasium, Healthcare Dept, Kitchen, Education Dept, Library, Chaplaincy, Reception, Visits Hall and Workshops. Many other departments are located either in the main Administration block or elsewhere around the prison. The Visitor Centre is located separately, at the front of the main prison.

## **EVIDENCE SECTIONS**

### **Section 4**

#### **SAFETY**

**4.1** The HMIP Report (inspected 24/10/16 - 3/11/16) indicated some serious concerns relating to safety within the prison with 37% of those surveyed reporting they felt unsafe, 63% believing it was easy to access drugs which was leading to bullying, violence, debt and consequently increasing numbers of self-isolating prisoners. The report noted that Safer Custody meetings lacked focus and did not analyse the available data, identify trends or take action to make prisoners safe (HMIP report 2017).

Safety in prisons has deteriorated rapidly during the last six years. People in prison, prisoners and staff, are less safe than they have been at any other point since records began, with more self-inflicted deaths, self-harm and assaults than ever before. Serious assaults in prison have more than doubled in the last three years, rates of self-harm are at the highest level ever recorded and assaults on staff have gone up 88% in the last two years (Source – Prison Reform Trust).

**4.2** Since the publishing of the report there has been a development of clear strategies for Safer Custody, self-isolators, self-harmers and bullying with detailed action plans. The Safer Custody committee met monthly during the year and was well represented by Governors, Safer Custody team, Custodial Managers, Head of Security, Chaplaincy, DARS (Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service), OMU, Samaritans and IMB.

**4.3** There was excellent participation from prisoner representatives for violence reduction, listeners, insiders and social care, who played an important part in discussions and were able to give relevant insights into drug and violence levels and threats. Currently there are 4 VR reps, 12 Listener reps, 9 Insider reps, and 2, over 50 reps. They have access to all house units in the prison and have a high profile, demonstrating a level of valuable skills. A Listener is a prisoner trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners. Insiders are prisoners who introduce new arrivals to prison life and provide them with useful verbal and written information.

**4.4** The Safer Custody committee has clear terms of reference with a comprehensive standing agenda and considered examination of a full range of statistical data from a variety of sources. It attempted to balance the quantitative information with useful qualitative insights provided by all participating members. There is now a better understanding of the nature of the problems, better intelligence and rapport with victims which helps delivering practical solutions. HMP Featherstone is committed to creating a culture that is focused on rehabilitation rather than violence. This culture will support individuals to take control over their own progression by making decisions and solving problems in a pro-social manner rather than using violence.

**4.5** There were 153 assaults (prisoner on prisoner) which is an increase from the previous year (114), whilst assaults (prisoner on staff) were 30 which is a decrease from the previous year (40). Good work has been done in this area to improve safety for all. Staffing levels during the year were insufficient (average 98, low of 78) thus putting a significant pressure on the ability of officers to cope with incidents many of which were associated with the high level of NPS use throughout the prison. The recent improvement in establishment figures to 114 has in recent months shown an improvement in morale of both staff and prisoners and a confidence in dealing with some of these issues. Whilst many experienced staff have been lost, newer recruits are starting to be more confident and particularly middle managers have a clearer vision of what is required in this area. More proactive approaches are being taken, perpetrators are being challenged, given early warning notifications and networks are being disrupted. However, there remains an undercurrent of violence and 57 recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour.

**4.6** ACCT (Assessment care in custody teamwork) plans were well managed throughout the prison and thoroughly reviewed. There were 319 ACCT documents opened during the year, the majority relating to self-harm. The Safer Custody team were proactive in considering an analysis of the statistics and in seeking further research and evidence in order to develop solutions to reduce areas of concern. There are currently 16 ACCT assessors within the prison and ten on the waiting list for the course. During the reporting period, staff received training in ACCT management and SaSH.

**4.7** Cases of self-harm were reported in detail and although there were a high number of incidents (260), many of those were attributable to a small number of persistent perpetrators. The formal strategy in this area will be reviewed shortly and a toolkit is being developed to ensure thorough reporting of information.

**4.8** Regrettably, there were four incidents of death in custody during the reporting year. In the first incident, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's report made three recommendations:

- The Governor should ensure that allegations of violence, bullying or intimidation are taken seriously, investigated and dealt with in line with local and national policies. Prisoners identified as at risk of violence from other prisoners should be effectively protected.
- The Governor and Head of Healthcare should ensure that there is a robust system in place for reviewing appointments and medication before prisoners are discharged from the mental health team.
- The Governor should ensure that staff is fully aware of the procedures for dealing with barricade incidents, that these procedures are appropriate for the design of the unit and that the correct anti-barricade equipment is readily available.

Procedures have been put in place to address these matters.

The Board is satisfied that the families of the prisoners concerned were afforded compassion and support by the Prison Service and also that those staff affected were offered counselling and due diligence was paid to their needs.

**4.9** There were three recorded serious incidents where the command suite was opened during the reporting period (31/1/17, 14/6/17 and 29/8/17). Each incident was handled according to the appropriate protocol and IMB were able to ascertain information and observe treatment of offenders and general population. The first two incidents were localised but the incident on the 29/8/17 resulted in substantial damage to House 5 which necessitated the transfer of those prisoners residing there to other establishments. Initial clear up cost was in the region of £35,000. Following repairs/refurbishment it is hoped to re-open House 5 sometime in early December, 2017.

**4.10** The problem of prisoners choosing to remain behind their doors for safety reasons continues to be of concern, both for prisoners' wellbeing and the consequent pressures placed on staff managing them. There is a clear self-isolator strategy and work is also being undertaken on a regional approach with evidence collected through forums and interviews. This is in its early stages but it is encouraging to see an evidence based approach being utilised. The Safer Custody team have made some positive improvements in this area with designated staff working closely with those prisoners to help them manage debt and other issues and gradually to be introduced back into normal prison life. It is encouraging to see the number of self-isolators falling which seems to indicate that the strategies are working. The number of self isolators has fallen from a high of 36 to a present low of 12. The Board still has concerns that a prisoner who has been self-isolating for a long time may develop both physical and mental health issues as a consequence.

**4.11** The non-smoking ban came into effect on the 7/8/17 with a clear strategy for implementation. Healthcare provided support and there was plenty of information about the roll out and how to manage cessation. The introduction of additional gym sessions was welcomed. For some prisoners it was challenging but the introduction of vaping alternatives were welcomed thus alleviating tensions. There is some suggestion that there has been an increase of reliance on NPS as a result.

**4.12** NPS use continues to be of major concern and is the underlying cause of other issues of violence, bullying and debt. The VR (violence reduction) reps have been able to work cooperatively with staff to provide different approaches and in particular Houses 3 and 4 staff have been more proactive in challenging perpetrators.

**4.13** The handling of reception and induction to the prison is under review. The damage caused to House 5, where new prisoners are first placed, means that the whole process will be changing. Staff has been made aware of the triggers relating to safety and where critical issues can be overlooked. The induction officer now gives a briefing and introduces insiders and listeners, then accompanies new prisoners to House 1. Report back from prisoners seems to indicate that this makes them feel more integrated into the prison rather than being back to the start of their sentence process. It is our understanding that House 5 may be used as a resettlement unit.

**4.14** The Governor and his senior management team are to be commended for their proactive approach in several ongoing areas, all of which will help to improve on the situation since the recent HMIP inspection. The last audit of the prison relating to Safer Custody was in 2015 and it is therefore likely that the Operational systems assurance group is likely to visit soon to audit policy, processes, first night arrangements, risk management, self-harm and violence handling.

There is also involvement in PRISM (Promoting Risk Intervention by Situational Management). This is an assessment tool that identifies situational factors that may contribute to violence in HMP Featherstone through evaluating a range of evidence based situational risk factors known to influence institutional violence to assisting in the effective targeting of resources. A report is likely in March 2018.

## **Section 5**

### **EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**

**5.1** The Equality Act 2010 lists protected characteristics as: Disability, Race, Sexual orientation/gender, Religion and belief, Marriage and civil partnership. The IMB monitors that prisoners with any of these characteristics do not suffer any unnecessary disadvantages.

**5.2** The Equalities committee normally meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the Governing Governor. It is usually well attended by SMT (Senior Management Team) protective characteristic leads as well as prisoner representatives for the various strands. Data generated from the Equalities Monitoring Tool is used to identify and analyse any identifiable areas of inequality and then steps are taken to redress any imbalances. The Equalities policy is due for review in November.

**5.3** DIRFs (Discrimination Incident Report Forms), are carefully monitored and investigated within the given target time. During the reporting period 21 DIRFs were submitted and investigated with five of these upheld. The breakdown of DIRFs by category was Disability (3), Sexual orientation/gender (1), Race (13), Marriage and civil partnership (1) and Religion and belief (3). The total number of DIRFs for the previous reporting year was 19. Tripartite scrutiny panel meetings take place at HMP Featherstone, HMP Oakwood and HMP Brinsford periodically to check that the quality of DIRF investigations is thorough and appropriate.

**5.4** PEEPs (Personal, emergency and evacuation plans) are continuously reviewed. As at 31/10/17, there were 13 live PEEPs across the establishment with those located as follows: House 1 (2), House 2 (3), House 3 (2), House 4 (4), House 5 (0), House 6 (0), House 7 (2) and Segregation Unit (0). During the course of the year a "Work area Assessment" was devised that records arrangements in place for the prisoner whilst in that area. These arrangements also cover staff.

The Board is concerned that the stair lift by Houses 3/4 has not been working for some considerable time due to age and vandalism by prisoners. We also have concerns about the stair lift in the Visits Hall as this seems to function sometimes, but not always. Urgent action should be taken to ensure that these are put back into working order and if possible made vandal proof. We understand a bid has been submitted to replace both of them.

Consideration should also be given to an additional stair lift in the establishment to ensure disabled prisoners can easily access all parts of the prison and not be disadvantaged. We understand there are currently two prison owned wheelchairs, located on House 7.

**5.5** The age profile of prisoners at HMP Featherstone is as follows:

<b>AGE RANGE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF PRISON POPULATION</b>
21-29	200	34.8%
30-39	215	37.5%
40-49	98	17.1%
50-59	47	8.2%
60-69	12	2.1%
70+	2	0.3%

**5.6** The breakdown of prisoner population by ethnicity is as follows:

<b>ETHNICITY CODE</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS OF THIS ETHNIC CODE WITHIN THE ESTABLISHMENT</b>	<b>TOTAL % OF THIS ETHNIC CODE WITHIN THE ESTABLISHMENT</b>
A1 – Asian/British: Indian	21	3.7
A2 – Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	33	5.7
A3 – Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	4	0.7
A4 – Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0	0
A9 – Asian/Asian British: Any other background	12	2.1
B1 – Black/Black British: Caribbean	51	8.9
B2 – Black/Black British: African	14	2.4
B9 – Black/Black British: Any other background	11	1.9
M1 – Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	28	4.9
M2 – Mixed: White and Black African	6	1
M3 – Mixed: White and Asian	0	0
M9 – Mixed: Any other background	9	1.6
O9 – Any other ethnic group	3	0.5
W1 – White: Eng/Welsh/Scot/N.Irish/British	329	57.3
W2 – White: Irish	5	0.9

W3 – White: Gipsy or Irish Traveller	3	0.5
W9 –White: Any other background	39	6.8
Not stated	6	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>99.9</b>

### 5.7 Disability.

There are currently 184 prisoners who have self-declared, varying levels of disability with these being well managed on residential units (There were 133 in the preceding year). Some have declared more than one disability. The breakdown of disabilities is as follows:

Mental Illness - 76	Visual impairment (incl. blind) - 16
Other disability – 53	Hearing impairment (not deaf) - 14
Learning difficulties (incl. Dyslexia) - 47	Learning disability (including autism) - 11
Reduced mobility - 31	Progressive condition - 5
Reduced physical capacity - 23	Speech impediment - 4
Dyslexia - 17	Severe disfigurement - 2
	Other mental impairment - 2

Some prisoners with disabilities might need extra help. The Care Act 2015 provides for this. If a prisoner thinks he has social care needs he can ask for an assessment. The local council, where the prison is situated, will consider the case and then decide whether they can give the care and support asked for. This might be help with daily living, such as help using the shower or getting dressed. The Council might agree a care and support plan which will say what help is needed and who will provide this.

### 5.8 Older prisoners.

There are currently 61 prisoners over 50 years of age at HMP Featherstone. There were 52 in the preceding year which means that there has been an increase of 17.3%. (Nationally, people aged 60 and over are the fastest growing age group in the prison estate. There are now nearly triple the number there was 14 years ago. Source -Prison Reform Trust). The age profile for this group is as follows:

Age Range	50-59 years old	60-69 years old	70+ years old	Total
Population	47	12	2	61
Percentage	77.05%	19.67%	3.28%	100%

Older prisoners reside on all House blocks with the majority living on House 7, which provides a more stable and quieter environment and is better equipped for the older prisoner as it facilitates showers and toilets within the cells. They do integrate well with other age groups and their maturity helps to create the behaviour House 7 represents and expects.

Employment continues until pensionable age and sometimes beyond at the prisoners' request. HMP Featherstone encourages employment for pensioners, as it creates interactivity and keeps the individual actively fit.

The over 50's population are offered various activities tailored to their needs i.e. Outdoor walks, Bowls, Gym sessions (providing a broad range of activities for all abilities), Book club and

socialisation evenings. This group is represented by peer representatives who meet in the Chapel on a monthly basis to discuss/report on group related matters. They attend various prison meetings to represent their particular group. Discussions are taking place exploring the possibilities of having voluntary, unpaid age representatives for each House unit.

This is an area that should constantly be under review and steps taken to ensure that prisoners receive appropriate care, as they would do, if they were in the outside community.

### **5.9 Religion and Belief**

The Chaplaincy team comprises 3 full time Ministers and approximately 12 sessional staff representing different faiths. There are 22 registered religions and about half that number is actively supported. Holy days for all faiths are observed, numerous festivals celebrated and adequate provision is made for various group meetings, prayers and study sessions. There are about 80-85 volunteers working in the Chaplaincy. The Board is pleased to report that in March, following a Chaplaincy Assurance Compliance check they received a score of 97%.

There are currently approximately 80 foreign nationals within HMP Featherstone (93 the previous year). The term "foreign national prisoner" encompasses many different people. They may have come to the UK as children with parents, or be second generation immigrants; they may be asylum seekers or been given indefinite leave to remain as a refugee; they could be European nationals; those who have entered the UK illegally or were in the UK as students, visitors or workers who have got involved in the criminal justice system. Foreign nationals (non-UK passport holders) currently make up 11% of the prison population in England and Wales (Prison Reform Trust). Home Office immigration surgeries are run every 6 weeks. The Equalities Governor is looking into an alternative company coming into Featherstone to provide independent advice and guidance to foreign national prisoners as Refugee and Migrant Service have declined this due to their own resourcing issues. There is a language line (The Big Word), but our understanding is, that it is not used a great deal.

The GRT (Gypsy, Roma, Traveller) group meet regularly although numbers attending meetings fluctuate. Their community was celebrated in June.

The Chaplaincy also offers support to prisoners who have either lost a family member or had seriously ill relatives or friends. Many other groups/initiatives are run, which support prisoners such as – Prison Visitors, the Prisoner's pen friend scheme, the Samaritans, the Listeners scheme, Alcoholics Anonymous, Yellow ribbon and counselling sessions. Prisoner health awareness day was on the 1<sup>st</sup> November and they also hosted an Employers' forum.

### **5.10 Race**

Few, bi-monthly BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) forums have taken place as proposed but the Equalities Governor is putting together a yearly plan for forums to be held. Black History events were celebrated in October.

### **5.11 Sexual Orientation/Gender**

There is at present little representation for the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) group as there are only four prisoners in the establishment who have self-reported in this characteristic strand. There are no reported transgender prisoners within HMP Featherstone. There are policies in place regarding sexual orientation and the management of transgender prisoners. There has also been recent staff awareness training in this area. Perhaps, more could be done to promote sexual orientation and awareness around the prison.

**5.12** The Visits Hall provides a clean, warm and welcoming environment in which prisoners can meet with family, friends and their legal representatives. There is an adequate snack bar where a variety of food and drinks can be purchased. Facilities are generally good - toilets, nappy changing etc. However, some sections of the carpeting are stained and ideally should be cleaned or replaced. There is an adequate supply of toys and books for younger children but we question whether there is sufficient provision for older children. The Board is aware that some of the booths used for closed visits have been damaged by prisoners. We understand that there are plans to refurbish them and reduce their number.

We believe family engagement is positively encouraged through both normal visits and the 12 family days each year including Xmas, when Father Xmas pays a visit and presents are distributed to prisoners' children.

**5.13** The Visitor Centre, which opened in 1997, is located separately, in front of the main prison. It was run by HALOW (Help and Advise Line for Offenders, Wives and Families), a community based family support service for many years but following competitive tendering, it is now run by Barnardos who took over as the provider from October. It is run by a dedicated team of full time staff, sessional workers and volunteers. It provides a pleasant environment for visitors to wait before going across to the main prison. There are refreshments, toilets, inside and outside play areas for children, lockers and a prayer area. Wall posters and leaflets provide extensive information on all manner of subjects including transport services. In the reporting period 2016/2017, 20,000 visitors passed through the Visitor Centre including 5,000 children.

The Board feels that the exterior play area is a little tired and would benefit from weeding, repainting and the provision of newer outside toys.

**5.14** There are currently seven Veterans in custody (ex-armed forces) within HMP Featherstone.

## **Section 6**

### **SEGREGATION**

**6.1** The Segregation Unit occupies two floors and comprises: 10 standard cells, a special cell, administration office, adjudications room, showers, kitchen, kit room, storeroom, prisoners' toilets, staff toilets, exercise yard and holding/waiting room. An adequate supply of books is provided for reading material and stock is replenished by the Library when necessary.

**6.2** The Segregation unit re-opened earlier this year following repair and refurbishment. From August 2016, up until then, segregated prisoners were managed on B spur of House 2 which acted as a temporary segregation/re-integration unit.

**6.3** Board members visit the Segregation unit every week as part of their Rota visit to ensure that the unit is clean, there is suitable bedding and the residents have access to exercise, showers, canteen and the telephone. The Board speak to all prisoners and see if they have any concerns. They complete all segregation history sheets for the prisoners and make comments in ACCT documents if they are open. Additionally, members sit in as observers at prisoner's segregation review boards which usually take place on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Whenever possible, we attend Adjudications, which are held daily and chaired by the duty governor. The district judge comes in twice a month for referrals to him/her.

**6.4** During the reporting year 174 prisoners were taken down to the Segregation unit. Board members attended 183 segregation reviews (167 in the previous year). Board members are not always routinely informed of new arrivals brought down to the segregation unit or who is being reviewed and when. This is the responsibility of the Segregation unit. Improved communications in this area is necessary. The breakdown of prisoners being brought down to the Segregation unit is as follows:

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
8	4	19	11	3	12	20	18	21	24	17	17

The breakdown by number, of the prison rule those prisoners were held under, were as follows: Rule 53/4 (51), CC (24), Rule 45 GOOD (97) and Rule 45 OP (2).

With regard to C& R (Control and Restraint) training. 154 operational staff to be trained. 142 operational staff were in date and 12 were out of date. 92% overall.

There were 2,784 Adjudications carried out in the reporting period. The Board is concerned that at times the appropriate paperwork is not always completed correctly or in a timely manner and as a consequence some cases are thrown out or dismissed. The breakdown of Adjudications, month by month follows:

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
153	210	166	294	268	165	325	337	297	221	224	124

As at 30/10/17, there were within the prison, 71 prisoners (12.28%) on Basic status, 250 (43.25%) on Standard and 257 (44.46%) prisoners on Enhanced status.

**6.5** By its very nature, the officers in the Segregation unit often have to deal with very difficult, abusive, aggressive, violent and vulnerable prisoners, who exhibit extremes of behaviour, some having to be managed on three man unlocks and others possibly on dirty protests. The majority of prisoners held in the Segregation unit speak very favourably about the officers that supervise their segregation. The total number of dirty protests held in the Segregation unit in the reporting period was 7 (three of these were from one prisoner in October this year and the other 4 were from different prisoners at the early part of the year when there was a troublesome Segregation population). One prisoner was held in the Segregation unit for 3 months or more (94 days).

The Board commends the staff, for dealing with all the prisoners in their care, in a very professional, caring and compassionate manner. They work hard to engage with prisoners and hopefully get them returned to their normal location as soon as possible. They have to strike a balance between supporting and encouraging vulnerable prisoners and managing those who challenge the good order and discipline of the unit. Prisoners are treated humanely and with respect regardless of their bad behaviour.

**6.6** Due to the nature of prisoners held in the Segregation unit, there is often significant damage done to cells and this results in some cells being out of action and unusable for some time. Quite often, repairs, take far too long to be carried out. In particular, Cell 4 has been out of action for some considerable time. Some prisoners held in the segregation unit suffer because of the damage done to cells/showers by other disruptive prisoners. One cell was being used without a functioning light and it took nearly four weeks for this to be sorted. The Board considers that this is totally unacceptable.

**6.7** SMARG (Segregation, Monitoring and Review Group) meets quarterly to review and monitor the use of segregation under PSO 1700. The Adjudication Standards meeting follows on from the SMARG meeting and analysis of Adjudications is undertaken to identify any particular trends and whether any particular group appears to be disadvantaged.

**6.8** Self- isolation has been a serious cause for concern during the year but steps have been taken by the prison to redress this problem. A self- isolating prisoner is classed as someone who is completely withdrawing from the regime, is not engaging with staff and spends most of the day in cell with no contact. A self-isolating prisoner is not an individual who refuses to attend work but is able to engage on the House unit outside of their cell. Self-isolation is often a result of running up debt and fear of reprisals from other prisoners. All staff are asked to be vigilant in identifying and monitoring prisoners who they think might be withdrawing from the regime or self-isolating.

The consequences of self-isolation for prisoners are the possible effects on their mental and physical health, lack of meaningful contact with staff, lack of exercise and access to showers, telephone, food, work or education. For staff, they have to find more time to manage this group and this impacts on the running of the normal regime. As a result, self-isolators are sometimes resented by the general population.

The Local Self-Isolators policy outlines how Featherstone will work with those who choose to isolate themselves in order to support them to progress through their sentence.

Currently there are 12 self-isolators at Featherstone and they are positively encouraged and supported to reintegrate into normal prison life as soon as possible. There are 3 on House 1, 4 on House 2, 4 on House 3, 1 on House 4, 0 on House 5, 0 on House 6 and 0 on House 7. They are all seen by the Deputy Governor (two per day), are offered in-cell education, are seen by the activities orderlies (peer supporters) and are actively encouraged to engage with the regime.

## **Section 7**

### **ACCOMMODATION (including communication)**

**7.1** At HMP Featherstone a total of 703 prisoners can be accommodated across seven house units with a total CNA (Certified Normal Accommodation of 671). Houses 1-4 accommodate 123 prisoners each, House 5 houses 100, House 6 houses 35 enhanced prisoners and House 7 accommodates 76 prisoners and is a healthy lifestyle unit.

**7.2** Single cell occupancy is the norm except for House 5 where there are two prisoners to each cell. There are also a number of double cells on Houses 1, 4 and 7. Most cells have integral sanitation, power points and a light switch. Few issues have arisen where two prisoners share a cell.

**7.3** There are no integral toilet facilities on House 6 which means that prisoners are allowed to open their individual cell doors at night to access toilet facilities on their own floor.

**7.4** House 5 is currently out of use due to a serious incident on the 29<sup>th</sup> August. It is scheduled to reopen early December 2017.

**7.5** The prison accommodation is in a dilapidated condition in almost every area and the situation is exacerbated by the time taken for routine maintenance to be carried out.

**7.6** The communal showers are in an awful condition throughout. At a visit in September to review them a varying degree of tidiness was seen. However, all were badly ventilated and radiators could be seen rusting on the walls with mould present on some ceilings. Almost all shower curtains were bent and shower curtains were missing in Houses 1 and 4. On House 2, panels between showers were missing as were some tiles. In one spur the curtain was tied up and a drain cover was not fixed down. House 6 however is the worst case with holes in the ceiling above the showers thought to be caused by blocked drains from the floor above. Complaints have also been received about the length of time showers are out of action due to maintenance issues.

**7.7** The communal toilet facilities in Industries are also in a poor condition.

**7.8** There has been a persistent issue of rubbish being thrown from the cell windows on some House units. This is both extremely untidy and unhealthy as it is encouraging vermin which has been the subject of complaints both to the prison and the IMB. Staff are making attempts to combat this but the heart of the problem is the poor state of windows in some Houses which allow rubbish and food to be thrown out and could facilitate smuggling with drones.

**7.9** Issues of kitchen maintenance have been a constant feature of IMB rota reports with maintenance times being excessive. Examples include:

- Bratt pans mentioned as not working on the Rota report of 7/11/16 not being replaced and working until 2/6/17.
- A torn fridge curtain mentioned as part of a hygiene inspection in January has not been repaired or replaced.
- Kitchen dishwasher initial estimated date for engineer visit for work as 3<sup>rd</sup> July had not occurred by 25<sup>th</sup> October.

**7.10** During the year the Kitchen hygiene rating fell from 5 to 2 (January) due to the presence of rodents and maintenance issues. This 5 rating was subsequently regained at the beginning of July.

**7.11** Meal service appears to be timely and taste testing by members of the IMB has confirmed edibility. There was a reported issue of food not being served hot but this was addressed by a change in procedure which was checked as being observed. There are issues relating to the quantity of food supplied. Portion size is very dependent on meal choice. Even though all meals are signed for on leaving the Kitchen some Houses are constantly stating that insufficient meals were supplied and returning to the Kitchen for additional food.

The annual budget for the Kitchen is £506,000 but that is based on normal occupancy. The food costing per prisoner remains at £2.03 per day.

**7.12** In general, kitchen staff were properly attired although issues relating to all staff not wearing gloves are mentioned in a small number of reports. Those prisoners working on serveries on House units were not always wearing the appropriate clothing. This appears to be a failing as far as supervision is concerned.

**7.13** The time taken for maintenance issues to be resolved is a constant with issues being mentioned in Rota reports including:

- An occupied cell in the Segregation unit where a light bulb needed changing for several weeks.
- Washing machine (House 4) reported out of action 23/3 and dishwasher reported out of action 29/4 mentioned as still out of action 31/5.

**7.14** On the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 21 cells were out of action, with some being out of action for a considerable time. With the national prison population growing (86,327 as at 27/10/17) it is more important than ever to get these cells back into use as soon as possible. Those responsible for maintenance have to work quicker and smarter.

**7.15** Staff/prisoner relationships appear to be generally good with staff appearing to have a good knowledge of individual prisoners.

**7.16** Prisoner access to telephones appears to be good, although on occasions, quite a number of telephones on House units are out of use and awaiting repair.

**7.17** Conversations with prisoners indicate that from their perspective, arrangements for canteen and mail order catalogues, generally work well.

## **Section 8**

### **HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)**

**8.1** Care UK has been commissioned since April 2016 to deliver healthcare within the prison. A range of services are provided:

- GP (General practitioner)
- Pharmacist
- Podiatrist
- Optician
- Dental
- Mental health and psychosocial interventions
- Physiotherapist
- Clinical substance misuse
- Weekly clinic held by Psychiatrist.

**8.2** The health management team now includes a Business Manager and this has made for efficient running of the department. The health team have a good relationship with the Governor and senior management team. There is good attendance at local and regional meetings.

**8.3** The Quality Assurance improvement meeting takes place monthly where operational issues are discussed. The Deputy Governor attends this meeting. The Governor is responsible for chairing the quarterly local delivery board meeting. Prisoner forums are held quarterly and are facilitated by the Deputy Head of Healthcare and the Business Manager. Attendance at this meeting has increased as Prisoner Council representative's now attend.

**8.4** There are currently no vacancies as there has been ongoing recruitment. A new post of Pharmacy Technician has been created to help with medicine management, to ensure that there are no delays in the ordering and administration of repeat prescriptions. Agency staff are used when necessary.

**8.5** All prisoners have a full healthcare assessment on arrival to the prison, in Reception. A range of primary care and psychological services are offered. All prisoners are offered a wellbeing assessment. This is a holistic assessment that considers substance misuse, mental health and physical needs, social concerns and housing issues. Interventions include sign posting to services, health promotion and/or in- house treatment.

**8.6** There is no inpatient facility at HMP Featherstone. If a bed is required, then this will be dependent on which prison is on call. The on-call rota is held by Birmingham prison and they will locate an available in-patient bed. It has been reported that at the current time there are not enough beds to meet the demand within the prison system within the region. The length of time taken to access a bed is compounded by the fact that an initial assessment must be undertaken at Featherstone prison by a nurse and either the Psychiatrist or GP, dependent upon the patients' need. An in-patient referral will then be submitted. Birmingham prison will then ask for a repeat assessment by a second nurse. This assessment may take place seven days later and seems to be an unnecessary loop in the system which can cause a delay on patient care. Transfer to a secure facility follows the same process, should the patient require a secure hospital placement.

**8.7** The Safer Custody Governor is the social care lead for the prison. Healthcare staff is aware of the referral process but have yet to make a referral.

Key issues raised in IMB Rota reports:

- NPS remains a concern within the prison system due to the sheer volume of users. This has an impact on healthcare workload as a number of codes blue and red have been put out and this has an impact on clinics being cancelled. In the opinion of Healthcare, there have been a number of inappropriate codes called. However, it has to be said, members of prison staff call the code in good faith.
- The prison has been working to smoke free status. This has now been achieved and was reported to be a smooth process with good prisoner engagement. The availability of vapes for those smokers wishing to access them has assisted in the process and the health promotion team have ensured that sufficient numbers of smoking cessation clinics have been delivered to meet demand.
- The prison does not have sufficient officers profiled to take all prisoners to their scheduled hospital appointments. Only 2/3 escorts can be facilitated per day. The ongoing issue with this benchmark has caused difficulties with rescheduling appointments. With improved staffing within the prison this will now be reviewed in the New Year.
- A number of strategies have been trialled to improve the high non-attendance rate for health- related appointments. A porter is now in post whose role entails chasing up non-attendees. Early signs are positive and have shown a reduction in non-attendance of GP appointments.

- The Healthcare department has one employed GP and three self-employed GP's. There is a maximum waiting time of two weeks for a routine GP appointment.
- There is a five week wait for a routine dental appointment. A new dental chair has been purchased for the department which is now up and running.
- Routine, non-urgent optician and physiotherapy waiting lists are at six weeks.
- Onsite ultrasound scans and x-rays takes place. Telehealth consultations take place with A and E (Accident and Emergency) departments and specialist consultants. The introduction of telemedicine is helping to reduce the need for hospital escorts.
- The expansion of the health team and the range of services delivered on site necessitate the health team to have larger accommodation. There is no accommodation within the department that can facilitate group sessions, IDTS (Integrated drug treatment strategy) or psychosocial appointments. All clinical rooms are regularly booked and the shortage of space is having a negative effect on waiting lists. This has been an ongoing issue and local resolutions are being investigated.
- Prisoner concerns are addressed face to face with the opportunity to formalise concerns if the prisoner is not happy with the response provided. There has been a 75% satisfaction rate with the care offered. No formal complaints have been received by the Healthcare department.

## **Section 9**

### **EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

**9.1** A comprehensive list of educational and training programmes is issued to all prisoners on arrival to the establishment. These programmes are both academic and vocational and are regularly tailored to suit the individual needs of the students. They are delivered at all levels to equip the prisoners with the best chances of gaining further training, education or employment on release from the establishment.

The department is mindful of the latest trends in learning and skills which enables it to incorporate these into its curriculum and this is updated every year. Currently the learning and skills plan for 2017/2018 is being finalised together with the three-year development plan.

**9.2** The Education department is staffed with well qualified and experienced teachers and trainers and is adequately resourced and equipped. As stated in last years' report, a new manager was appointed in October 2016 and he is continuing to lead the department in a competent and professional manner. The Education department was inspected by Ofsted (Office for standards in education, children services and skills) in September 2016 and they obtained a Grade 2, which is good with outstanding features.

**9.3** The curriculum is both wide and varied, because the prison currently has a high turnover of short term prisoners. This does not affect the teaching and learning as a significant percentage of courses are of short duration. Should the prisoners be unable to complete a course on being transferred to another prison there is provision for them to take their work with them and complete it, assuming the new establishment can deliver the subject/s.

**9.4** Milton Keynes College continues to be the main education provider with Dudley, North Warwickshire and Stoke Colleges sharing responsibilities for providing additional courses and qualifications.

**9.5** Because there are a percentage of self-isolators, (prisoners who refuse to vacate their cells), there are non-accredited training packs available for these prisoners to complete in their cells.

**9.6** Rail track continue their support with practical training to suitable prisoners on track laying and track maintenance, which gives prisoners the opportunity of employment upon release.

**9.7** Staffordshire Libraries continue to support prisoners with their reading on a 1:1 basis via the Shannon Trust which now works in all areas of the prison. Additionally, One to One Maths, a similar based charity, provides mentor support to develop prisoner's maths abilities.

The Library is well stocked with modern literature to meet the needs of the prison population and is run by a professional and dedicated staff. 77% of the prisoner population use the library. It is clean and tidy and an oasis of calm.

They host many events during the year including the Six- book challenge (an initiative inviting individuals to select 6 books and record their reading in a diary) and Remembrance Sunday. On the 20/10/16, the distinguished author Martina Cole paid a visit to Featherstone. In July, Peter Kelman, who was nominated for the Man Booker prize in 2011 visited the prison. In September, the Oscar winning film director – Michael Dudok de Wit, the head of BBFC - Lucy Brett, the head of BFI – Mark Reid and The Picture house Cinemas manager – Leah Byrne paid a visit and discussed the BBFC/BFI film club project with prisoners. Inductions, distance learning, driving theory tests, craft workshops, Storybook/DVD Dads (in which prisoner's record stories for their children) as well as many other initiatives are undertaken on a regular basis.

**9.8** The modern industrial workshops continue to offer realistic working environments which assist in preparing the prisoners for "life after prison". Courses offer good accreditation and work skills which are recognised by future employers. By providing these skills it is envisaged that this will lead to a decrease in the re-offending rate.

**9.9** The Board continues to recognise the challenging work, together with the professionalism of both the Workshop and Educational staff in these times of continued austerity.

#### **9.10** Gymnasium and Sports facilities

- During the reporting period the staffing levels had increased to a full complement of qualified and trained PTI's (Physical training instructors). This is due to change during the following two months because one member of staff is retiring for medical reasons, one is on secondment for discipline training and another has applied to be an instructor at the National training centre at Lilleshall Hall, Shropshire.

This will leave a depleted staff of three PTI's and two non-qualified discipline officers as assistants. One of the discipline officers however has applied to attend a PT training course. The department when fully staffed should have six PTI's.

- As previous reports have alluded to, this area of the prison is one of the most heavily utilised and very popular with prisoners. It has been proven, that prisoners who take part in sports and other physical activities tend to take out their aggression in this area rather than each other or staff members. It also relieves the boredom of prison life. During the year, the numbers attending the gymnasium have increased on previous years.
- Due to the increased staffing levels over the year we are pleased to report that the following courses have taken place:

a) First aid – This course has been executed by the PT staff themselves.

b) A Personal Trainers course at level two. It is hoped that a level three course will commence shortly. The personal trainer course has been out sourced to an external contractor with the attendees obtaining a student grant to fund themselves through training. The cost of which is £2,060 per student.

- The establishment has again entered a football team which plays in the Staffordshire County league (Division 2), with the basketball team playing in the West Midlands league. The basketball season commences in two weeks time. Both teams help establish a valuable link with the local community.
- Fund raising for worthy causes is always on the agenda for the gymnasium staff and this year £1,118 has been raised. The ten mile Acorns run (for the Acorns children's hospice) and the reappearance of professional snooker's Jimmy White, who gives his time freely, to challenge prisoners to snooker and pool, contributed to this total. Money was also raised for Help the Heroes which involved carrying a 20 kilogramme Bergen for over 85 miles on the running machines. It is only with the PTI's innovative thinking that these amounts of money were raised.
- The members of the Board are always impressed with the enthusiasm, professionalism and diligence shown by the Gym staff. Their attitude and good humour to the prisoners adds to the relaxed atmosphere in the department.

## **Section 10**

### **WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

**10.1** HMP Featherstone continues to support all prisoners with the opportunity of a wide range of working activities which include fabrication and welding, food preparation and cooking, horticulture, printing, bricklaying, motor and motorbike mechanics, painting and decorating, customer services, business administration as well as recycling of all waste products produced within the prison.

**10.2** The Engineering and Enterprises facilities at Featherstone continue to be actively busy manufacturing a wide range of products for the PSPI (Public Sector Prison Industries) and other outside contractors. Textiles have continued to produce up to 52,000 T shirts (for the prison service) per quarter along with sweat shirts and donkey jackets. With the introduction of piece work, working this year has seen productivity increase dramatically. The introduction of the Rail Track (HS2 contract) course (run four times per annum) will offer further opportunities for prisoners to gain employment on release. All members of staff continue to support the facilities identifying new business contacts and opportunities for the future.

**10.3** HMP Featherstone created a total of 650 activity places throughout the year these being fulfilled in both morning and afternoon sessions. These activities can be split as: 22% Learning and Skills, 40% Services (welding, sheet metal, paint shop, general assembly etc) and 38% Work (textiles and print). All activities have been well attended with approximately 76% of all places being allocated and taken which demonstrates the continued emphasis made by HMP Featherstone in giving good and consistent ranges of workshops, work and prison industry placements.

#### **Sustainability**

**10.4** During the year Featherstone has continued to work hard in ensuring wherever possible financial savings/benefits or improvements can be made.

#### **Kitchen**

**10.5** Poor maintenance and repairs during the year led to the category of the Kitchen being downgraded to a level 2. Following improvements that level increased to a level 5.

**10.6** The quality of the information provided by the House units to analyse the food not being eaten due to either over production, poor portion control or food being ordered has been hit and miss and therefore an accurate picture has not been achieved this year. However, on a more positive note,

the information that has been supplied and collated has indicated a reduction over the period of extra meals being ordered.

### Waste Management

**10.7** Over the year 2016/2017 it is expected that approximately 113.67 tonnes of waste will have been prevented from going to landfill, with a further 107.4 tonnes stopped reaching skips. Featherstone's recycling total is expected to be in excess of 251.4 tonnes. Currently the national scrap target is 70% with Featherstone's recycling currently being at 90%. This has been achieved by recycling a wide range of items such as cardboard and paper (22.6 tonnes), metals (42.3 tonnes), plastics (0.54 tonnes), glass (0.74 tonnes), electrical items (2.0 tonnes), prisoner clothing (0.50 tonnes), along with wood, furniture and many other items. The revenue generated by recycling is £14,168.87 and the savings by not allowing 107.4 tonnes reaching landfill is £14,169 approximately for the year.

### Health and Safety

**10.8** The health and safety of both staff and prisoners is overseen by a committee chaired by a Health and Safety manager supported by a small team of health and safety professionals.

**10.9** Featherstone has currently 51 open litigation cases (43 the previous year) with a potential liability of £480,000. Accident investigation has become a far more rigorous process this year and it is hoped that evidence collated will reduce the amount of litigation cases and costs. Litigations are from all areas within the prison where the "claim culture" seems to be increasing.

**10.10** There were 100 members of staff currently trained in First Aid, of these 56 are trained emergency first aiders and of the total, 44 members of staff are defibrillator trained.

**10.11** There is a monthly vaccination programme at HMP Featherstone which is administered by a nurse from an outside agency and coordinated through the People Hub.

**10.12** There have been a significant number of cell fires – 27 in the reporting year. All of these fires were started maliciously apart from the last two. In the preceding reporting period there were 24 cell fire incidents and only 6 in the year before that.

The way staff manage and tackle cell fires has vastly improved during the last twelve months. In most cases the "Cell Fire Safe System of Work" is strictly adhered to and this is evidenced in the CCTV and BWVC footage captured from these incidents.

**10.13** A member of the IMB board attends scheduled meetings and is supplied with the minutes.

**10.14** Two members of the Board attended the Fire Contingency Exercise at HMP Featherstone on the 30th September.

## Section 11

### RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

**11.1** The reducing re-offending and resettlement needs of all offenders are identified upon induction and referrals to relevant agencies are made. The resettlement needs of all offenders are addressed under the following seven pathways.

1. Accommodation (Appropriate and accessible accommodation is the foundation of successful rehabilitation and management of risk and harm to others).
2. Education, Training and Employment (Better literacy and numeracy skills are key to both improving the employment prospects of offenders and to their engagement with a range of services).

3. Mental and Physical Health (Mental health problems can undermine the successful rehabilitation as they can exasperate significantly the difficulties many offenders find in coping with the demands that leaving prison places upon them).
4. Drugs and Alcohol (The drug and alcohol delivery service will deliver a fully integrated treatment model with the focus on achieving and maintaining meaningful recovery outcomes).
5. Finance, Benefit and Debt (Ensuring that offenders and ex-offenders have sufficient money to live and budget on as a pre-requisite to their rehabilitation).
6. Children and Families (Maintaining family relationships can help to prevent ex-offenders reoffending and assist them to resettle successfully into the community).
7. Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour (Research has demonstrated that many offenders have not developed the ability to think through their actions properly. It is important to recognise that any improvements made in custody are quickly lost if there is insufficient aftercare for offenders in the community).

**11.2** The resettlement preparation is a collaborative partnership involving the National Probation Service, the CRC, OMU as well as other contributing organisations such as The National Careers Service and Job Centreplus. Most of the services are triggered in the last 12 weeks of the prisoners' conditional release date. National Probation Service is responsible for high risk prisoners and the CRC for medium/low risk offence prisoners. The PACT (Prison Advice Care Trust) delivery team are based at HMP Featherstone to support prisoners with multiple and complex needs around the seven pathways agenda. This is to reduce re-offending, by targeting those needs and by working through a pathway programme, on a one to one basis during the six months to end of sentence.

**11.3** The Board is of the opinion that Offender Management is consistent and of good quality. Following criticism in the last HMIP report, OMU have worked very hard to reduce the backlog of outstanding OASys. The CRC and OMU now work much more closely with one another and have a joint meeting every week.

**11.4** The Board feels that Offending Behaviour programmes are helpful to prisoners although some prisoners do not always want to do them. The number of programmes is presently limited.

**11.5** The Board considers sentence planning generally timely and of good quality. Relationships have been built with other prisons but we feel there is still room for improvement. Sentence plans should be reviewed regularly and tailored to the individual prisoner.

**11.6** Pathways to Reducing Re-offending are addressed reasonably well but the Drugs and Alcohol pathway is struggling.

**11.7** The Board considers that the cooperation in MAPPA (Multi-agency public protection arrangements) is effective

**11.8** The Board considers that the advice and assistance available to prisoners prior to release is generally good although some prisoners might disagree with our assessment.

**11.9** The cooperation between The Probation Service and the CRC is much better than it was but there is still room for further improvement

**11.10** HDC's (Home detention curfew) and Cat D reviews are going well. ROTL (Release on temporary license) is rare, due to eligibility.

**11.11** Featherstone has a positive approach with regard to the encouragement of family links between prisoners and their families/friends. Family visits take place on the last Friday in each month. Additional family visits for Lifers/IPP prisoners and Peer mentors are also held. Milton Keynes College runs a family relationship course three to four times a year for Featherstone prisoners. The Visitor Centre provides a very warm, welcoming environment for visitors.

**11.12** The Board does not consider that there is sufficient progression for deportees.

**11.13** CRC runs pre- release sessions for prisoners fortnightly. Lots of information is made available from what happens on the day of release, to looking at license conditions, firearm

restrictions and disclosure of offences. CRC run a couple of interventions that are designed to be genuinely “Through the Gate” and these are

- Meet and Mentor – This involves a specially trained volunteer mentor coming into prison to meet eligible prisoners, then meeting them at the prison gate on the day of their release and supporting them in their location for the first 8-10 weeks after leaving custody. As well as this support, there is also access to an out of hours call service. This service will provide information, advice and guidance when the offices are closed.
- The Self Awareness and Relationship Management course – This involves sessions in custody, then sessions in the community post release and so is started in the last 12 weeks of someone’s sentence. The course involves group session and 1:1 sessions with a trained counsellor to ensure that prisoners are emotionally ready for release and have a familiar face and input during that crucial first month at home.

## **Section 12**

### **THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

At the end of the reporting period the Board had a composition of thirteen members. During the reporting period we recruited six new members, who are still in their probationary year and we added another experienced member who joined us on a Board to Board transfer from HMP Coldingley. Sadly, we lost four members (two of which had served over 9 and 15 years respectively). We very much thank them for the selfless and dedicated work over many years. They will be very much missed.

Our Boards’ composition of members is very diverse both in age, gender, ethnicity and religion. They come from different backgrounds and bring a wide range of varied skills and life experiences to the table. The Board are a dedicated group of volunteers from within the local community, within which the establishment is located. They are appointed by the Secretary of State and are specifically charged in satisfying themselves as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody in the prison and the range and adequacy of programmes preparing them for release.

- Rota visits are carried out weekly to different areas of the prison and a report is written on the member’s findings and a copy is sent to The Governing Governor.
- Board members attend Segregation reviews, usually twice a week, to ensure that prisoners are treated fairly and processes are adhered to.
- Board members attended Adjudications whenever possible, either in front of the Duty Governor or the Independent Adjudicator.
- Applications by prisoners to the Board are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
- There were twelve monthly Board Meetings during the reporting period. Presentations were made to the Board, by different prison departments, to further our knowledge and ongoing training (Psychology, User Voice/ Prison Council, Healthcare, ACCT training by Safer Custody, Education and Health and Safety).
- The Chair and the Governing Governor agreed a Service level agreement in February 2017. Board members agreed to abide by the Information Assurance Security Statement in April.
- To assist in our monitoring role, members attended an extensive range of prison meetings as observers (Safer Custody, Equalities, Pathways, Pre-release reviews, Prison Council, Full Staff Briefings, Visitor Centre Forum, Health and Safety, Sustainable Development and Quality Assurance). These greatly enhanced our understanding of what the problems were and how the prison proposed to address them.

- Our Annual Team Performance Review was carried over the summer. The purpose of this was to examine what we were doing well, and if not, what we could do to improve our performance and ways of working.
- Some Board members attended the Fire Contingency Exercise at the prison on the 30/9/17.
- We visited HMP Oakwood, HMP Brinsford and the NTRG (National tactical response group) who are based near Doncaster to witness Tornado training.
- The Board attended serious incidents whenever the command suite was opened.
- Some members of the Board attended night visits to the prison.
- The Chair/Vice Chair attended three regional Area Chairs meetings at HMP Birmingham, HMP Stafford and HMP Swinfen Hall.
- The previous Chair attended HMP Featherstone's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in November 2016.
- Members of the Board attended the Carol Concert at the prison in December 2016.
- Periodic reviews were carried out on new members in their probationary year to check on their progress and see what support, if any, mentors and other Board members could offer them.
- The Chair gave several presentations to newly recruited prison officers on the work of the IMB.
- Personal protection training was undertaken by some members of the Board.
- An additional IMB Applications box was fitted and located on the bottom concourse opposite the gate to Industries
- Triennial reviews were carried out in September.
- Some Board members attended Family visits.
- The Board held an election in August/September to elect new Board Officers for 2018.
- Board members in their probationary year attended the compulsory, national, new member's courses in Birmingham and Leeds. The current Chair attended the compulsory, national, Board leader's course in Birmingham.
- A letter was sent to the Prisons Minister in July expressing the Boards' concerns about the unacceptable state of the prison fabric at HMP Featherstone and the conditions some prisoners were living in and also the unacceptable delays in getting repairs carried out. We regret to say that we did not receive an acknowledgement from The Prisons Minister confirming receipt of that letter even though we know he has received it. We sent chase up reminders to The Prisons Minister on the 20<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> November and are still awaiting a response from him.
- The Board very much appreciates the good working relationship it has with the Governing Governor, his senior management team, all the prison staff and prisoners. Their cooperation and willingness to assist us in our monitoring role makes our task of monitoring that much easier.

- The Board also wishes to thank both Diane Hazeldine and Jenny Forsyth, our IMB clerks during the reporting period, for all their hard work behind the scenes, supporting our role within the prison.
- Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues for all their considerable support and assistance in the preparation of this report. Their enthusiasm and dedication in monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody is to be applauded. They give up their valuable time both freely and voluntarily.

Keith Hollinshead  
 IMB Chair 2017  
 HMP Featherstone  
 November 2017.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13
Total number of visits to the Establishment	392
Total number of Segregation reviews attended	183

### **Section 13**

#### **APPLICATIONS TO THE IMB**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>	<b>Previous reporting year</b>
A	Accommodation Inc laundry, clothing, ablutions	7	6
B	Discipline inc. adjudications, IEP, sanctions	7	5
C	Equality	1	1
D	Purposeful activity inc. education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	9	6
E1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	4	4
E2	Finance inc. pay, private monies, spends	6	8
F	Food and kitchens	4	1

G	Health inc physical, mental, social care	26	10
H1	Property within this establishment	12	6
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	16	24
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	6
I	Sentence management inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	6	19
J	Staff/prisoner concerns inc bullying	16	19
K	Transfers	15	3
L	Miscellaneous	24	18
	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF IMB APPLICATIONS</b>	154	136

#### Section 14

#### MATRIX OF AREAS VISITED AT HMP FEATHERSTONE BETWEEN 1/11/16 AND 31/10/17

AREAS VISITED	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	TOTAL
Segregation	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	51
Healthcare	5	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	52
Kitchen	5	4	4	2	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	51
House 1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		2	1	11
House 2	1		2	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	3	13
House 3	1				1	1	1	1		2			7
House 4	1		2	1		1	1		1		1	2	10
House 5		1				1	1	1	1	1			6
House 6	2	2		1		2	1		1	2			11
House 7	1	2			1		2						6
Reception					1		1	1	1			2	6
Library	1	1		1		1	1	1	2			1	9
Control Room			1					1		1			3
Chaplaincy	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Education	1		1			1	1					1	5
Gymnasium		1	1		1						1	1	5
Offender Management Unit			1		1						1		3
Security			1		1		1	1	1		1		6
Clothing Exchange Store			1			1		2					4
Industry Stores			1						1				2
Visits Hall					1	1							2

Visitor Centre			1			1				1			3
Risk Reduction	1												1
Probation	1			1	1								3
Motor Vehicle Workshops			1										1
Workshops					1		1		1				3
Work, Vocational Training and Employment					1	1							2
Health and Safety					1								1
Administration					1								1
Resettlement						1							1
Print shop										1			1
Workshop Stores							1						1
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>292</b>