



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

for reporting Year  
1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017

Published  
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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### Introductory Sections

<b>Section</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Statutory Role</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Description of Establishment</b>	<b>7</b>

### Evidence Sections

<b>4</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Equality and Fairness</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Segregation/Care and Separation Unit</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Accommodation (including communication)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Healthcare (including mental health and social care)</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Education and Other Activities</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Work, Vocational Training and Employment</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Resettlement Preparation</b>	<b>18</b>

	<b>The Work of the IMB</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>Applications to the IMB</b>	<b>21</b>

### **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.

## **2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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2.1. This report covers the period from the 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2017. Evidence comes from observations made on rota visits, attendance at meetings and scrutiny of data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

2.2. With a population of over 1300, Highpoint is one of the largest Category C Training and Resettlement prisons in the country. Throughout the year the establishment continued to face many challenges in particular with regard to staffing levels (see Paragraphs 4.4.3 & 4.) and the availability and use of NPS (see Paragraphs 4.6.1 & 3.) Highpoint is subject to a Performance Improvement Plan for the period 2017- 2018. The plan, a commitment between the Governor and the Deputy Director of Custody for East England, covers: Safety, Improvement in Performance, Decency, Developing Staff, Reducing Reoffending and Security.

2.3. Although the number of reportable incidents decreased overall during 2017 there were spikes in the levels of reported assaults in June and November and some prisoners continued to report feeling unsafe (see Paragraph 4.4.1 & 2).

### **Main judgements**

2.4. Despite the challenges faced by the prison:

- Overall prisoners receive fair treatment at Highpoint, but some inconsistencies mean that there can be varying experiences and opportunities. For example, on the North side there has been no designated Equality Officer since July and the Visits Hall lacks a play area. See Paragraphs 5.1.6 and Paragraph 5.4.3.
- Through its leadership, the prison has a strong commitment towards humane treatment of the men in its care and the decency agenda. This though has been undermined at times by delays in maintenance and repairs and the standard of cleanliness on some units. See Paragraphs 7.1.4 and 7.2.1.
- Preparation for release is variable. While there are some very good courses and initiatives (See Paragraphs 10.1.1.and 10.2.1.to 10.2.4.) the Board has had concerns about the delivery of sentence planning although by the year end there were improvements. See Paragraphs 11.1.1 and 11.1.2.

### **Main Areas for Development**

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

##### **2.5.1. Staffing**

Staff shortages are being addressed but have still had a significant impact on the prison's ability to deliver a consistent daily regime and reach its full potential. The Board seeks reassurance from the Minister that funding for increased staffing will continue to be made available and that the retention of experienced staff will also be addressed. See Paragraphs 4.4.3. & 4.4.4.

##### **2.5.2. Works Maintenance Contract**

The Board has seen no improvement in the service provided by Carillion during the reporting period. Repairs and maintenance have not been carried out in a timely manner. This is to the detriment of living and working conditions within the establishment. The Board is aware of the difficulties facing Carillion and hopes that the Minister will ensure that any review of the

maintenance contract will result in a much improved service which will have positive impact upon the prison. See Paragraph 7.2.1.

### 2.5.3. Property

The Board notes there has still been no real progress or improvement in the handling and transportation of prisoners' property between establishments, or inter-prison communication regarding losses. Will the Minister ensure that an urgent review is undertaken to bring an end to the current most unsatisfactory position. See Paragraph 7.5.2.

## **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

### 2.5.4.. Property & Compensation

The Board note that where compensation is paid for lost property prisoners may be disadvantaged by the policy of not permitting replacement 'like for like' items to be posted in. The Board asks that consideration be given to allow such items where the responsibility for the loss rests with the prison. See paragraph 7.5.1.

### 2.5. 5. NPS: Disruption of Supply

The risks that NPS usage poses are not unique to Highpoint. The Board asks that the Prison Service acknowledges the extent of the problem and initiates an urgent coordinated and dynamic strategy to disrupt the supply into establishments. If additional resources and dedicated staffing are required then the Board asks that Governors are given an assurance that these will be forthcoming. See Paragraph 4.6.4.

## **TO THE GOVERNOR**

### 2.5.6. Decency Agenda

The Board has noted with concern the widely varying standards in cleanliness across the prison and asks that careful monitoring is put in place to seek and maintain improvement. Tempest Unit has been of particular concern with 31 weekly reports from the Board highlighting poor conditions falling well short of the level of decency expected. See Paragraph 7.1.4.

### 2.5.7. Personal Officer Scheme

Many prisoners still do not have access to a named Personal Officer. The Board considers that the value of talking to an Officer fully aware of the on-going problems faced by an individual should not be underestimated and would benefit the whole establishment. The Board asks the Governor to ensure implementation of the Personal Officer scheme across the prison. See Paragraph 7.6.1.

### 2.5.8. Servery Food Comment Books.

The Board requests closer management, checking and signing of the Food Comments Books that should be kept in every servery. The Board has found some books in Unit Offices, and has also observed the lack of management signatures indicating that prisoners' comments are not being noted. See Paragraph 7.4.2.

### 2.5.9. SMARG Meeting Statistics.

The Board is pleased to report that Segregation and Review Group meetings are being held on a quarterly basis. There is, though, still a problem with producing the essential statistics. The Board requests that action is taken to ensure these are updated and always readily available. See Paragraph 6.1.5.

#### 2.5.10. Re-Deployment of Equalities Officer

The Board notes that the Equalities Officer is often re-deployed and asks that his 19 hours per week be ring-fenced. See paragraph 5.1.6.

#### 2.5.11. Property & Compensation

The Board requests that steps are taken to improve the local management and safeguarding of prisoners' property at Highpoint. £7,902 was paid out in compensation during the year. See Paragraph 7.5.1.

### **Improvements**

2.6.1. The Board acknowledges the improvements in sentence planning by the year end with more promised. See Paragraphs 11.1.1. & 11.1.2.

2.6.2. The Board welcomes the positive and beneficial rehabilitative culture on Vickers, Halifax and Hawker Units. See Paragraphs 11.2.1 & 11.2.2.

2.6.3. The benefits to Highpoint of the commitment of the Business and Community Engagement Team is acknowledged. See Paragraphs 10.2.1 to 10.2.5.

2.6.4. The Board notes the positive impact of the rolling programme of the painting of residential units. See Paragraph 7.1.3.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

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3.1 HMP Highpoint was originally opened as a prison in 1977 and has undergone a number of estate reconfigurations over the years. The prison is sited on a former Royal Air Force base using many of the original buildings and is split over two adjacent (North and South) sites. It is situated some 10 miles south east of Newmarket in rural Suffolk.

3.2 Highpoint is a male Category C Training and Resettlement prison for London and Essex. The operational capacity for the reporting period was 1325.

3.3 Accommodation at the prison varies considerably in terms of fabric and facilities. On the South side there are ten residential units and on the North there are five. Most units have in-cell sanitation except for Vickers and Halifax on the South and Lysander, Hawker and Dominie on the North, which have 24-hour access to lavatory and shower recesses. Three units with en-suite cells are available on the South. Most cells are single occupancy, however there are some doubled up single cells on both the North and South sites. In-cell television is available to all prisoners with the exception of those on Basic regime.

3.4. The dynamics of Highpoint with its split site, large population (with some 80% coming from London or Essex) held some distance from home and in a remote and rural location continues to create significant performance challenges for the prison and makes Highpoint a complex establishment.

3.5. Agencies and contractors for the prison include:

- Resettlement providers - London and Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC).
- Drugs rehabilitation services are now provided by CGL (Change, Grow, Live). Up to May the service provider was Lifeline.
- Ormiston Families provides services for families and children
- Healthcare is provided by Care UK Ltd
- Escort Contractors include Serco and G4S
- Learning and Skills – Education and Training is provided by Novus
- Maintenance is provided by Carillion
- National Careers Service
- Job Centre Plus
- St Mungo's Housing
- Shaw Trust

## Evidence sections 4 – 11

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### 4 SAFETY

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#### Transport, Reception and Induction

4.1.1. No prisoners have raised concerns with the Board about their well-being while travelling to Highpoint. However in a serious, albeit isolated, incident a Board member noted a van with 5 prisoners on board being kept waiting outside the main gate in extremely hot weather. It took the van an hour to get through and two men were feeling very unwell, having already travelled for two hours. Governors were alerted and through their intervention the men were seen quickly by Healthcare and given appropriate care. Gate staff were reminded of their obligations and the Board has not noted any re-occurrences.

4.1.2. The Board has observed that Reception staff are always friendly and courteous while carrying out the in-depth reception basis. However it has been noted that the Safer Custody Audit highlighted concerns about some elements of the Cell Sharing Risk Assessment forms not being completed correctly. Highpoint has responded by ensuring that new CRSAs are completed for all arrivals.

4.1.3. Late arrivals can pose a problem as there is more limited time to complete paperwork before lockdown. Staff though are mindful of the priority to give attention to the health and safety of an individual. Prison orderlies play a particularly valuable role in providing information and support to new arrivals within the new Reception Unit.

4.1.4 The Induction Unit moved to Handley Unit at the end of 2016 and has now bedded in. The induction programme includes advice and information to help new arrivals settle into Highpoint and find out what services and programmes are available. The Chaplaincy sees all new arrivals to signpost pastoral care available from their team. Very good support is also available from Listeners and Orderlies from a range of peer groups.

#### Safer Custody

4.2.1. The Listener Scheme is actively promoted within Highpoint. Units are visited regularly and prisoners can ask to see a Listener on a one to one basis. If, for any reason this request cannot be facilitated, then the Samaritan phone is offered.

4.2.2. The number of self-harm incidents has reduced from 419 in 2016 to 343 in 2017. There has though been an increase in the number of ACCTS opened from 396 in 2016 to 423 in 2017. The Board has noted that ACCTs are opened promptly when self-harm thoughts or concerning behaviour is noted. Members ask to see prisoners on open ACCTs when visiting residential units and note that sometimes observations give only brief details. In an improvement, though, on previous years the Board has observed that open ACCT documents do now appear to be following a prisoner when he leaves his residential unit.

4.3.1. Three prisoners from Highpoint died during the year, two after a period of illness and one man was found dead in his cell. Following their deaths support was offered to fellow prisoners on their respective units by the Listeners and Chaplaincy. Highpoint's Care Team was also available to support staff. The Prison & Probation Ombudsman carried out appropriate investigations and the Board noted that visits were well publicized in advance.

4.3.2. At the end of the year two inquests were outstanding dating back to deaths in 2015 and 2016. On the 6<sup>th</sup> October the Senior Coroner for Suffolk issued a Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths to Highpoint's Governor and Head of Healthcare. This followed on from an inquest concluded in November 2016.

The Coroner raised concerns about:-

- The sharing of information between healthcare and prison staff.
- The recording of 'static' or 'historical' risk information in a form that would make it more readily accessible.
- The importance of ensuring adequate and appropriate recording on prison wings of potentially significant events or observed changes in a person's mood or behaviour.

A response was required by the 1<sup>st</sup> December. The Board was advised that an extension had been sought and at the end of the year was still waiting to hear the outcome.

### Violence Reduction

4.4.1. Although statistics show that overall violent incidents have reduced (see Paragraph 4.5.3.) there were two months that saw an increase. October showed a worrying rise in reported assaults on prisoners and staff. At 36, this was a 55% increase on the previous month and also a 50% increase on October 2016. The previous high was in June, also at 36. The incidents were thought to be linked to the use of NPS.

4.4.2. The Board is aware through talking with prisoners, and the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) Survey, that there is a perception that safety is an issue at Highpoint. While acknowledging the strong commitment by the Governor and SMT to maintain a safe environment, the Board has concerns, particularly with regard to staffing levels. Gangs, NPS, and debt are all perceived to have had an impact. A consistent core of experienced officers familiar with residents is, in the Board's opinion, essential on units to maintain a safe environment.

4.4.3. The Board continues to have concerns about the impact of under-staffing on the safety and security of the prison and the impact upon the quality of the prisoner experience. Shortages have had a detrimental effect with staff being regularly re-deployed to cover essential areas. There was also the necessity to boost numbers with officers on secondment from other establishments. By the end of the reporting period there was an improvement in prison officer numbers following national and local campaigns, but Operational Support Grade staff numbers still remained low. The Board considers that on residential units it is essential to have a regular core of staff familiar with the day to day routine and a good knowledge of the men in their care. There is a risk that if this is not met, prisoners may feel that their ongoing issues and needs are not understood and vent their frustrations.

4.4.4. The retention of officers is also of concern to the Board and it hopes that this issue will be addressed at national level. Highpoint can ill afford to lose more of its solid base of experienced staff. Passing on knowledge and experience is an essential part of mentoring new staff.

4.4.5. Bullying victims are supported by staff and known perpetrators challenged. The Board notes the rise in Rule 45 requests from prisoners rose to 317 from 216 the previous year. Of these requests (to move off the unit or transfer out) just 25 were granted. The victim's willingness to name a perpetrator is usually a factor when considering the request. Their reluctance to do so is often because retaliation is feared. If the Rule 45 is not granted, the Board is aware that at times a 'catch 22' situation can then arise with the victim's fear rising because they have not been moved. At times this has led to self-segregating on their unit.

4.4.6. Force was used to control prisoners on 332 occasions during the year. When the Board was present to observe control and restraint, no concerns were raised. It has though been noted that there have been delays during the year in completing all the supporting paperwork.

## Security

4.5.1. A Violence Reduction/Security Tasking Meeting of Governors and key members of staff has been introduced. Held weekly, the remit is to discuss any problematic prisoners, trends, and 'hot spots' as they were arising. All options available to pre-empt disruptive behaviour are then discussed. A Board member attended on an ad-hoc basis and noted the level of intelligence both gathered and acted upon in a pro-active manner.

4.5.2. Overall the number of reportable incidents decreased during the year from 2009 in 2016, down to 1870 in 2017. Assaults and fights were down from 336 to 313. The number of finds of weapons, phones sim cards etc. increased from 821 to 864.

4.5.3. The Board notes the good working relationship established with the local police. There is good sharing of intelligence and some successful operations have been carried out. Highpoint's perimeter fences with easy access from fields and footpaths leaves it vulnerable. The fences are perceived as a soft target for throw overs of contraband. Security officers are always quick to respond to reports from staff or members of the public to reports of suspicious behaviour.

4.6.1. During the year the following drugs finds were made:-

Drugs Recovered	Cannabis Resin	Cannabis Herbal	Heroin	Subutex	NPS
2017	16.8g	1674.3g	0.2g	0.16g	1433.9g
2016	23g	670g	0.2g	35g	4135g

4.6.2. For 'hooch' there was a 29.5% increase in the amount recovered compared with the previous year:

- 2017 approx. 580 litres
- 2016 approx. 409 litres

## Drugs and Substance Misuse

4.6.3. Drugs and substance misuse, in particular NPS, is a serious concern at Highpoint and continues to impact upon day to day life. While the amount of NPS found has decreased this does not necessarily reflect upon the suspected or reported usage. The Board has noted the frequency, sometimes on a daily basis, of reports identifying prisoners believed to be 'under the influence' of NPS. Trafficking is often linked with mobile phones, bullying, and debt. Usage can pose a threat to health and lead to disruptive or violent behaviour.

4.6.4. Testing is now possible for NPS but identifying it is just one part of the equation. The Board recognizes the determination by the Governor and SMT to prevent all drugs and substances getting into Highpoint. Staff are pro-active in identifying and searching prisoners believed to be involved in trafficking. In spite of this, drugs still get in through post, over the fence or smuggled in. Highpoint is not alone in facing this, with NPS in particular a concern for many establishments. The Board considers that a major national initiative is needed to disrupt supplies. Given the appropriate resources and staffing it should be possible to do more to reduce the scale of drug trafficking within a secure and contained environment.

4.6.5. The Board notes that little 'on suspicion' drug testing has been carried out during the year because of re-deployment of the officer concerned. Where intelligence of usage is provided then it is essential that the prisoner is tested as soon as possible. It sends out a strong message to other users.

#### Drug and Substance Misuse Services

4.6.6. Services have been through a period of uncertainty. In May there was an abrupt disruption to the local Substance Misuse Programmes and Support when the provider Lifeline ceased operating. CGL (Change, Grow, Live) stepped in and took over the contract. There was an inevitable delay with the commencement of new misuse programmes. Staff though continued to provide support on a one to one basis. The contract then became subject to renewal by the Commissioners and by the end of the year notification of the successful provider was still awaited. Throughout the year and all the uncertainty, agency staff have remained committed to achieving the best possible outcome for their clients.

4.6.7. Transfers on/off the Drug Recovery Wing have at times been an issue. It is desirable that prisoners are moved onto the unit allowing them reasonable time to settle prior to starting the programme. Equally anyone found to be using and not embracing the ethos of the unit needs to be moved off as quickly as possible. Anyone removed from the programme/unit will be offered support by CGL. It is though up to the individual whether they choose to engage.

4.6.8. In July it was noted that CGL was not receiving potential client referrals following adjudications. CGL were instead, where possible, obtaining this information themselves from Highpoint's daily briefing sheet. It was agreed that Governors and Segregation Staff should be reminded of the need to refer, but at the year end this was still not happening.

4.6.9. Those being discharged from prison can be particularly vulnerable. CGL will make referrals to external agencies who can offer ongoing support.

## **5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**

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5.1.1 The prisoner population at Highpoint as defined by ethnicity is: White British 46%, Black 25%, Asian 10%, White Other 8%, Mixed 6%, Other 3%, GRT 2% (Gypsy Roma Travellers). This compares with 12% Black and 8% Asian in the prison population as a whole. Highpoint has a disproportionate number of Black and minority ethnic prisoners.

5.1.2. The establishment is pro-active in identifying prisoners at Reception/Induction in line with the Equality Act. The Board notes that Gypsy Roma Travellers are now more confident in identifying themselves and acknowledges the part the GRT orderly has played in this process.

5.1.3. The diversity of the prisoner community at Highpoint is at variance with the mainly white rural area in which it sits. It is therefore not altogether surprising that the staff population does not reflect the demographic of prisoners either. An excellent initiative started during the year, with the Community Diversity Officer delivering race and diversity training for new POELTs.

5.1.4. Highpoint has a dedicated Equalities Department covering all the protected characteristic groups. An Independent Community Diversity Officer [CDO] from ISCRE [Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality] is based at the establishment twice a week, and is involved with training the Department's orderlies. He also provides an independent review of the Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF) complaints system.

5.1.5. Of the 56 DIRFs received and investigated during the year, only one was upheld. The Board notes that the decision on the remainder was that there was 'no evidence' to prove discrimination. 31 of the 56 complaints concerned residential units. The Board saw a drop in IMB Applications on equality issues, 8 compared to 26 in the previous year.

5.1.6. Highpoint has an Equalities Officer who should devote 19hrs a week of his time to equality issues. These 19 hours have not been ring-fenced and during the year he was constantly re-deployed because of staff shortages. He only attended 2 out of 6 of the Equality Action Team Meetings. Prisoner Forums have not met their target of 4 meetings per year. The North Side of the prison has been particularly disadvantaged as there has not been an assigned Equality Officer since July.

5.1.7. The Board is mindful of its own lack of diversity although this does not seem to be a barrier to prisoners approaching members. To attempt to address this issue, publicity material for the latest recruitment campaign was displayed in areas such as supermarkets, public open spaces and 2 mosques, as well as the usual libraries, community shop and groups and volunteer bureaux.

#### Escalating complaints

5.2.1. Although notice boards display information about escalating complaints, prisoners often approach Board members for advice on how to take matters forward. Some residential units have Prisoner Information Points and these are well used.

#### IEPS

5.3.1. The Board saw a 19% rise in IMB Applications covering disciplinary matters, including the Incentive Earned Privileges Scheme (63 from 12 the previous year). Prisoners seem at times not to understand why privileges have been lost. This may be indicative of the lack of time spent by officers in explanations. It also highlights the need for a named officer to whom prisoners can speak. (Personal Officer Scheme)

#### Visits

5.4.1. Because of Highpoint's rural location travel for families can be both difficult and time-consuming. The standard of facilities offered to visitors is therefore important. While the Visitor Centre covering both North and South sites has been re-decorated during the year it still lacks refreshment facilities. Within both Visits Halls however the selection of food available for purchase has improved significantly. Any profit made is used within the prison, for example all weather gym equipment. See Paragraph 9.2.2.

5.4.2. The Board is aware that at times visits do not always start promptly, particularly on the North site. This impacts on the time families have together and can be a source of frustration especially when families have travelled long distances.

5.4.3. Ormiston Families provides very good facilities for children but in the South Visits Hall only. The Board has queried the lack of a dedicated play area for children in the North Visits Hall but has been told that there is insufficient space. Prisoners and their families therefore continue to be disadvantaged. The Board hopes this will be looked at again.

5.4.4. The prison holds regular family days giving a valuable opportunity for families to enjoy quality time together in a more relaxed atmosphere. The days are always well attended and staff work well to ensure a healthy balance between family and security needs.

## **6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**

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6.1.1. The Segregation Unit is run by a professional and dedicated team of officers led by a Governor and Custodial Manager. It can be a noisy and challenging environment with at times some very troubled and volatile residents. Members have visited during these times and acknowledge the calm and professional manner in which prisoners' needs are met even in difficult situations.

6.1.2 The year saw 813 prisoners pass through the unit. Assessments are always made quickly to facilitate a return to a residential unit or, where deemed appropriate, a transfer out to another establishment. At times the unit has had a high occupancy with all of its cells in use. No prisoner, though, has stayed in the unit for over a month.

6.1.3. Segregation Review Boards are held with a Governor, member of the Mental Health Team, Chaplaincy and IMB present. An IMB member will also visit every prisoner in the unit twice a week and is always permitted good access.

6.1.4. Adjudications held increased to a total of 4263 from 3886 the previous year. Members have observed these on a weekly basis and noted that at these hearings, prisoners have been shown respect and fairness.

6.1.5. The Board is pleased to report that Segregation Monitoring and Review Group Meetings are now being held on a quarterly basis. However for these meetings to be of real value, essential statistics should be available. Production of these has been an issue. The Board understands that this is because the previous compiler left the Unit. It requests that steps are taken to rectify this omission.

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

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### Accommodation

7.1.1. Cleanliness and tidiness varies quite considerably across the prison. The enhanced units reflect the residents who look after both their own and the communal living environment. On others the Board has noted that the standard of cleaning can vary from week to week.

7.1.2. Litter and rubbish were a particular issue in the grounds of Javelin and Wellington Units and had a negative effect upon the units. The Board was concerned about the number of tin lids they found strewn around – a safety issue the Board considered. Grilles have now been fitted to the windows and the situation is much improved.

7.1.3. There has been a rolling programme of painting on the units undertaken by residents. This has had a positive effect upon the living environment.

7.1.4. On 31 occasions in weekly reports to the Governor, the Board raised concerns about the poor general state of cleanliness of association rooms, landings and particularly shower recesses, on Tempest Unit. Standards on A Unit have been of particular concern. Lavatory bowls and seats heavily stained with faeces have been noted, not consistent with the standard of decency expected. The Board's reports resulted in an immediate improvement in conditions but this has not always been maintained therefore concerns remain ongoing.

### Works and Maintenance

7.2.1. Carillion's failure to provide a fully effective maintenance and repair service has had a negative impact across Highpoint. The Board has seen little improvement in the service

provided. While onsite employees have strived to effect repairs they have often been limited in what they can do. The Board understands that this is because Carillion has had problems with their supply chain when ordering general maintenance materials. At the end of the year the Board understands that there were over 900 jobs outstanding.

Specific concerns have included:-

- (1) General repairs to electrical equipment
- (2) General repairs to Plumbing
- (3) Maintenance and repair to the CCTV systems.
- (4) Healthcare on the North prison having no hot water or heating on a number of occasions.

The Board hopes the Minister will ensure a long overdue review of the maintenance contract to ensure that it fully meets the needs of a challenging prison environment.

### Regime

7.3.1. Staff shortages impacted adversely upon the regime, particularly during the earlier part of the year. Re-deployment of staff from residential units to e.g. ensure safe routes to workshops or education etc. was noted almost on a daily basis. While the Senior Management Team strived to lessen the impact, the Board noted that lockdowns of some residential units resulted. This disadvantaged either those unemployed, or all residents during evenings or weekend periods on the units selected. Although significant lockdowns were notified to residents in advance, this still interrupted the daily pattern of life particularly if family could not be phoned at the usual time. The Board was pleased to note this situation eased in the second half of the year as staffing numbers increased. Then 'spurring off' of individual wings rather than a unit lockdown was the practice observed.

### Catering & Canteen

7.4.1. South and North sides combined produce well in excess of two and a half thousand meals each day. The Board has tasted food at the point of serving on an ad hoc basis and been satisfied as to quality. Any shortfall in the number of meals received on the units is taken up promptly with the kitchen to ensure that everyone receives food. The Board has noted that servery orderlies do not always wear the appropriate clothing and this has been pointed out to staff.

7.4.2. Prisoners should have the opportunity to raise issues about their meals on a daily basis via a Food Comment book kept in every unit servery. These books should in turn be subject to regular management checks. The Board has noted failure in both these areas. Some books are kept in Unit Offices and a lack of management signatures indicates that comments by prisoners are not being noted.

7.4.3. Across both sites, broken or unreliable essential catering equipment has had a severe impact, with the Board reporting issues with the North Kitchen on 21 occasions, and the South 15. Staff and their teams of prisoner kitchen workers are commended for ensuring that in spite of difficulties, meals have always been produced.

7.4.4. Canteen Meetings for prisoners have been held but the Board has not received advance notice so has been unable to attend. It is understood that complaints have often focused on food quality, particularly vegetables and fruit. The costs and brands of canteen items is also of concern. The price of lavatory paper, for example, highlights this, with a canteen price of £1 for a two-roll pack. With availability at some supermarkets for under 30 pence per roll, prisoners do appear to be disadvantaged.

7.4.5. Tinned goods are readily available for purchase. During the year the Board noted that the discarded sharp-edged lids became an increasing litter and safety problem. See Paragraph 7.1.2.

#### Property

7.5.1. The management of property remains an ongoing problem and has been highlighted in previous reports. There have been delays in receiving permitted possessions from Reception following arrival or during unit transfers. Some property has gone missing and the Board understands that £7,902.00 compensation was paid out during the year. Compensation does not necessarily mean that an item can be replaced on a 'like for like' basis. Prisoners have to rely on ordering from a catalogue and this limits choice. Where the fault lies within the prison system rather than with the prisoner, this seems unduly harsh and the Board asks that this be re-considered.

7.5.2. Property often does not follow on after a transfer from another prison. Prisoner complaints are followed up by the Highpoint's Complaint Clerk but many establishments fail to provide a satisfactory reply or result. Sometimes no response is received in spite of frequent reminders. This is most unsatisfactory for all concerned. The Board re-iterates its previous requests for a complete review of the handling, transportation and issuing of prisoners' property and the establishment and enforcement of more effective communication between establishments.

#### Staff- Prisoner Relationships

7.6.1. While the Board has observed some very good examples of staff-prisoner relationships, it is concerned that staffing shortages and frequent redeployments have had a negative impact. The Board considers that staff familiar with residents is essential for care and support and also for the stability and security of units. Prisoners can become frustrated when they feel their needs and issues are not known or understood by staff. The Board remains disappointed that there is no consistent implementation of an effective Personal Officer Scheme across the prison. This year saw a rise in prisoners raising concerns formally to them regarding staff. IMB Applications rose to 79 from 49 in 2016. Issues raised varied but communication was often observed as part of the problem.

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

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8.1.1. Healthcare services are provided for seven days of the week but regrettably for a prison of this size, not on a 24-hour basis. Out of hours the NHS 111 service has to be used, supplemented as appropriate by the Emergency Ambulance Services. In a welcome initiative the addition of two paramedics (bank) to the team during the latter part of the year increased responsiveness. The initiative is to be evaluated.

8.1.2. Health Care Assessment is completed on each prisoner by professionally qualified practitioners within 24 hours of arrival at the prison. Routine and emergency appointments are readily available with the GP. Nurse-led clinics are provided for a wide range of acute and chronic health issues with established links to external specialist services in the community. Escort to out-patient or emergency departments are seen as a priority by the prison management but at times there can be delay in reaching scheduled appointments on time because of staffing shortages. Escorts are always available for emergency ambulances.

8.1.3. The demographic of the prison population on South tends to result in a greater proportion of pro rata emergency incidents than the North. This leads to particular challenges for the Health Care team as emergency calls are unpredictable. The North tends to be more settled and this enables a more pro-active and scheduled approach to healthcare and

health promotion. Calls to provide emergency care to prisoners under the influence of NPS can stretch resources.

8.1.4. Robust links are in place with the local Hospice, Hospital and MacMillan Services that enable long term and palliative care when required.

8.1.5. Prisoners frequently have poor dental health on entry to the prison and waiting list issues continue to be raised with Board members. The dental service has enabled strategies to improve attendance rates, and additional clinics have also been provided.

8.2.1. The Pharmacy workload is high and staff work in a cramped and hot environment. Funds for an upgrade of the facilities have been applied for by the prison. There are Pharmacy distribution points on each unit.

8.3.1. Mental health services are provided for prisoners with on-going or newly diagnosed problems. Active participation in all Segregation and ACCT reviews is also provided. Staff also deal with emergency situations such as self-harm or problems arising from substance misuse. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is available but provision of counselling services at a lower level of intervention would allow mental health staff to concentrate on prisoners with specific mental health problems.

8.3.2. In a welcome initiative a Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention service was introduced in the autumn. The aim is to invite 5% of the prison population for assessment each month (approx. 70-75 men per month). Initial feedback indicates that the service is becoming established and take-up is improving. This service also aims to signpost what the men can do to improve their health now and as they return to the community following release.

8.4.1. Regular external monitoring takes place through a number of agencies. Quality Assurance meetings are held every month and achievements and the management of potential or actual problems are discussed. IMB members are invited to attend.

8.5.1. Prisoners are given the opportunity to provide written feedback and also attend Health Forums. A new healthcare complaints service was introduced in the autumn of 2017 enabling more face-to-face resolution of complaints. The Board considers this a good initiative, but appreciates that at times the response delivered will still be unwelcome. The Board has seen a decrease in IMB Applications concerning Healthcare issues, 58 compared to 79 in 2016.

8.6.1. Suffolk County Council has a responsibility for the social care needs of prisoners. Equipment to aid daily living is provided and installed and where required, personal care needs assessed and arranged.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

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9.1.1. All prisoners should receive an initial English and Maths assessment on entry to the prison. The Board is aware that a number of prisoners are not attending this initial screening and that this is not always followed up. This results in incomplete information about educational levels of attainment. Opportunities could then be missed to address issues that may have an effect on rehabilitation, and future work opportunities

9.1.2. Understaffing and curtailments have both had an impact during the year. Curtailments, in some cases, have disrupted courses and extended the planned end date creating issues in

the drawdown of funding. This can have the effect of then reducing the number of activity places available

9.1.3. While the education programme operated close to its capacity through the year, there was an ongoing issue. Most of the courses are part-time and this discouraged attendance in favour of the increased pay that could be earned through full-time work. The Board was therefore pleased to learn that rates had been increased to bring them into line with employed rates.

9.1.4. The Board visits the Education Units on a regular basis. When prisoners have discussed their Education and Learning with Board members they have generally been very positive and stated that education and skills courses provided may assist them in gaining employment on release.

### Physical Activities

9.2.1. Prisoners make good use of the well-equipped weight training/cardiovascular facilities in the South and North gyms. A wide range of supervised activities is available. Staff shortages leading to a limited daily regime and the redeployment of Physical Education Instructors have led to the loss of gym sessions during the year. Sessions are always well attended so any curtailments are most unwelcome.

9.2.2. On a more positive note, a number of units now have the benefit of outdoor all weather gym equipment which appear popular with prisoners

### Library

9.3.1. Both South and North Libraries are well stocked with a good selection of fiction and reference books. Library and Education staff work in unison and this has enabled the introduction of additional education class visits in both libraries. Figures for the first quarter of 2017/18 are encouraging and show moderate improvements in both attendance and issue figures, particularly on the South.

9.3.2. Unfortunately 18 out of a total of 117 evening library sessions were cancelled between April and October 2017. This represents just over 15% of sessions. Nearly all were cancelled because of staffing issues (mainly staff required on escorts) or because of early evening incidents in the prison.

9.3.3. In an initiative welcomed by prisoners, a DVD lending scheme was piloted on Vickers and Halifax Units. It is hoped this will be extended.

## **10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT**

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10.1.1. The Board acknowledges that a good range of work is available providing prisoners with a regular daily routine and wage. In the vocational centre there are chances to gain qualifications and useful experience, whilst the plumbing, carpentry, tiling and the car maintenance workshop can lead to future work opportunities.

10.1.2. At 18.12.17 the percentage of unemployed in the Prison was 15.95%, this including retired prisoners and those unwell. Attendance records for the year shows an above target attendance in the workshops.

10.1.3. Recruitment of staff to work within the workshops is on-going; the low level of wages offered results in fewer applicants responding to advertisements. With tight numbers on staffing sickness or leave can result in a limiting of daily work places available.

10.1.4. A further workshop is scheduled to open, bringing a total of 8 workshops available to a maximum of 300 prisoners. The workshops generate a useful income, circa £100,000, as well as the manufacture of items to be used in the prison for example window grills and planters.

10.1.5. While some workshops and courses are only offered on one site, wherever possible prisoners will be moved between North and South in order to meet their individual needs. Security issues may though at times prevent this happening.

10.1.6. The Board commends the Recycling Workshop which has raised funds of £7,000 for charity through the sale of recycled furniture etc., and also Tailoring and Packing which are amongst the highest performing workshops in the prison estate.

### Employer Engagement Partnership

10.2.1. Through Employer Engagement Forums and 'Employability Fayres' Highpoint continues to develop its already well established links with local employers, agencies and voluntary groups. In October the 25<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Forum was held celebrating and reflecting upon the continuing support the Partnership receives from the community. The local MP attended.

10.2.2. Many prisoners do of course return to the London area when released. This can make it more difficult for the prison to assist with future employment opportunities. Partnership events, like the 'Employability Fayres' can though give valuable opportunities to seek advice and obtain useful information and contacts. The March one for example was attended by over 19 organizations and was rated as Good to Excellent by 90% of those attending.

10.2.3. Courses run through the Partnership Engagement have included Kier's 'Making Ground Programme' and Macs Plasterboard Systems 'Dry Lining and Plasterboard Training'. Both have led to some prisoners being offered interviews and employment.

10.2.4. The year saw a new Lifelines course run by the Royal British Legion Industries for veterans of the British Armed Forces. A week long course subjects included CVs and Life Skills. It is hoped that a further course will be offered in 2018.

10.2.5. Overall sponsorship by partners by way of donations and time has amounted to over £20,000.

10.2.6. The Board recognizes the contribution that the Business and Community Engagement continues to play in improving rehabilitative and employment opportunities for Highpoint's prisoners. See also Paragraphs 11.1.1. and 11.1.2.

## **11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION**

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11.1.1. The operation of the Offender Management Unit has been of concern particularly with regard to sentence planning. OMU Officers were often re-deployed and there were vacancies in the department. There were welcome improvements and by the end of 2017 only 13 plans were outstanding. Requests to see OMU case officers remained an issue, with prisoners approaching the IMB and complaining of delays, in particular on the North side.

11.1.2. In October the Governor announced further improvements with a targeted deadline of March 2018. All current residents should have a sentence plan by that date and,

importantly, up to the deadline, should not be disadvantaged by the lack of one. New residents will have a plan completed within 4-6 weeks of arrival. A strong commitment and the Board trusts it will not be thrown off target by any continuing re-deployment of OMU Officers.

11.1.3. The prison continues to hold in-depth Offender Journey Case Studies, overseen by the Head of Reducing Re-Offending. The studies involved the agencies and departments that take part in the prisoner journey from arrival to discharge. Any weakness in the process or inter-departmental working can be highlighted and good practice shared. The objective for all those present is to achieve the best possible outcome for all prisoners.

11.1.4. During the year 61 prisoners were granted Home Detention Curfew (HDC) and 3 Release on Temporary Licence. (ROTL).

11.1.5. The Board understands there have been communication issues between Highpoint's Community Rehabilitation Companies and external Probation Services. Delays on the vetting of nominated home addresses prior to discharge can cause problems. Some prisoners state they feel they face an uncertain

future as they approach release not knowing where they will live and work. Those prisoners without strong family support seem particularly vulnerable. Uncertainty can cause worry and frustration and may increase the likelihood of future re-offending. In a welcome initiative the Governor advised prisoners in October that by March 2018, prisoners with less than 3 months left will have their residential needs met by the relevant CRCs.

11.1.6. Prisoners arriving at Highpoint do not always seem to appreciate that the establishment falls within London's catchment area. Its remoteness from London is often mentioned to the Board as a major issue for visitors. Maintaining the all-important family ties can be a problem with limited face to face contact. With a transfer back to a London prison extremely unlikely, some prisoners resort to anti-social behaviour in the hope that they will be shipped out. Even transfers on compassionate grounds appear difficult to arrange.

#### Amends Rehabilitative Culture

11.2.1. The Board acknowledges the valuable part that the Amends Initiative and Culture plays in preparing prisoners for release. Vickers, Halifax and Hawker Units are good examples of this. Residents have enhanced facilities and privileges but in turn must accept increased responsibilities and pro-active ownership of their units. Accepting responsibility can be a key to the future.

11.2.2. The establishment has also benefited from this culture. Men from Vickers and Halifax Units have been deployed on other residential units to carry out basic maintenance work, including plumbing, carpentry and tiling.

## Section – Work of Board

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Although the Board has operated below its maximum permitted number, it has continued to meet its commitment to Highpoint in covering Rota and Segregation duties, attending incidents and a wide range of meetings. It has also been possible for two members to provide support to the Board at HMP Hollesley Bay.

During the year Board members visited HMP Warren Hill and HMP Hollesley Bay and held in-house training sessions. Speakers addressing the Board included representatives from Immigration and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

The Board will hold its Annual Team Performance Review in January. This will involve a review of the Board's performance, aims and priorities and plan how best to develop and take forward its monitoring role.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	602
Total number of segregation reviews attended	104

## Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	40	73
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	63	12
C	Equality	8	26
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	37	34
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	31	14
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	Included within section L	Included within section L
F	Food and kitchens	5	12
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	58	79
H 1	Property within this establishment	88	164
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	67	Included within section H 1
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	15	Included within section G
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	93	97
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	79	45
K	Transfers	119	93
L	Miscellaneous	45	113
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	748	762