



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

**HMP Lowdham Grange**

for reporting Year  
February 2017 – January 2018

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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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## A Sections 1 - 3

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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.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Lowdham Grange for the period 01/02/2017-31/01/2018. IMB evidence comes from a variety of sources including observations made on visits by members, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, consideration of prisoner applications to the Board and attendance at a range of meetings at the prison.

### **Main judgements**

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The reporting year has been a challenging one at HMP Lowdham Grange but has been managed well by the Director and his team.

Significant factors include:

- The use of psychoactive substances remained worryingly high and caused unpredictable and, at times violent behaviour. (Section 4)
- The prison was designated 'smoking free' in September and in that month levels of violence and instability rose significantly. (Section 4)
- Low staffing levels made management of prisoners difficult. The proportion of inexperienced staff contributed to challenging atmospheres on some wings. (Section 4)
- Significant numbers of prisoners were unable to access purposeful activity during the core day. (Section 10)

However, the Director and his team have taken effective action to address these issues including:

- Running frequent recruitment drives to increase staffing (Section 4)
- Using intelligence to identify potential problems and acting to minimise the risk of such problems (Section 4)
- Commissioning an 'in depth' report on Purposeful Activity and producing a detailed Action Plan to address issues identified (Section 10)

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

Generally prisoners receive fair treatment at Lowdham Grange although a few issues mitigate this view. These issues are:

- Problems with personal property. Too many prisoners report that property is lost during transfer from prison to prison. The retrieval of property stored at Lowdham Grange appears to take an unreasonably long time. (see Section 7 'Accommodation')
- There are too few opportunities for employment or training for all prisoners to be actively engaged in these activities during the core week. The allocation of work is sometimes seen by prisoners as lacking fairness, however the Board has seldom been able to find clear examples of this (see Section 9 Work, Vocational Training & Employment).

## **Are prisoners treated humanely?**

The Director has emphasised the humane treatment of prisoners at Lowdham Grange during the reporting year, for example the introduction of Violence Reduction Strategy and the development of the 'Social Responsibility Unit' have both been significant developments. (See section 4 'Safety').

However, the Board continue to be concerned about:

- The number of prisoners with mental health issues who are kept in segregation for extended periods of time because no more suitable placement can be found for them (Sections 4 Safety & 8 Healthcare)
- The number of prisoners who choose to 'self-isolate' and remain behind their doors during the day. (see Section 4 'Safety')

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

Although very few prisoners are released directly from Lowdham Grange the programme of education and work is designed to prepare prisoners for their ultimate release.

Education is varied and of usually good quality (see section 9 'Education').

Work areas also provide good experience of the working world but there are too few places available for the number of prisoners at Lowdham Grange. (see section 10 Work Training and Employment).

## **Main Areas for Development**

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### **TO THE MINISTER**

- Will the Minister explore ways to work more closely with other Government Departments to ensure provision for prisoners with complex mental health needs is more readily available and so reduce the amount of time such prisoners need to be held in segregation in order to safely manage them?
- Will the Minister review the advice available to prison management in order to facilitate the use of body scanners as a means of restricting illicit drugs getting into prisons?
- The policy which governs the use of computers by prisoners for the purposes of preparing legal documents such as court papers and appeals appears to make it almost impossible for prisoners to do so. Could this policy be reviewed to make such access more fairly available?

### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

- The maintenance and care of the building and grounds at Lowdham Grange is delivered by an in-house team and noted to be of a high standard. This is a model of how an 'on site' maintenance team, managed by the Director, can be effective and could serve as an example for other prisons.

- As has been reported in previous years, the physical provision for healthcare at Lowdham Grange is too small for the size and nature of the prison population. Could this be rectified as a matter of urgency?

## **TO THE DIRECTOR**

- Frustration about prisoners' access to their property stored at the prison continues to be evident. Could the resolving of this problem be prioritised?
- Will the Director review the decision making process involved in Segregation Reviews to ensure that the views of prisoners are appropriately considered?
- Will the Director ensure that the action plan to increase levels of purposeful activity is fully implemented and its impact on increasing employment for prisoners is measured?

## **Improvements**

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The reporting year saw improvements in some areas of previous concern, notably:

- Healthcare improvement has been reinvigorated by the new Head of Service (Section 8)
- The Safer Custody Strategy has been reinvigorated (Section 4)
- Significant efforts have been made to enhance staff morale (Section 4)

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

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HM Prison Lowdham Grange (LGP) is a Category B male training prison opened in 1998

It is located in the village of Lowdham 12 miles outside Nottingham.

The prison is operated by Serco Justice and Immigration a part of Serco Plc. (Serco)

All services in the prison, except Healthcare are provided by Serco.

The Certified Normal Accommodation is 888 with an Operational Capacity of 920.

At the start of the reporting year 1/02/2017 the prison population was 916.

At the end of the reporting period 31/01/2018 the prison population was 917.

The average population for the year was 915.

On the 31/01/2018 the breakdown of the prisoners held was:

Life sentenced prisoners	162
Indeterminate sentenced prisoners	42
Determinate sentenced prisoners	713

#### THE PRISON'S ROLE

The prison usually receives Cat "B" prisoners with more than 4 years left on their sentence. Many of the prisoners have convictions for offences involving violence. Prisoners arriving at the prison have always spent a period in prison at another establishment. Prisoners are usually transferred to a Category "C" prison when they achieve their Category "C" status or to a resettlement prison when they are close to their release date.

#### THE DIRECTOR

The Governor of private sector prisons is referred to as the Director.

They are appointed under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and have to be a certificated Prison Custody Officer.

#### THE CONTROLLER

All private sector prisons have a Controller's Team based in the prison. The role of the Controller is to monitor the contract between the Secretary of State for Justice and Serco to ensure compliance. The Controller and her team have held senior positions in state run prisons prior to appointment.

## **B Evidence sections 4 – 11**

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### **4 SAFETY**

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Safety and security were significant priorities for the prison during the reporting year and were, consequently, a significant focus for the attention of the Board.

#### **Context:**

Several issues contributed to instability in the prison during 2017 including:

- Staff shortages: staffing was seldom at the agreed level during the year however the Board noted that considerable efforts were made to maintain the full regime.
- Staff inexperience: the prison made strenuous efforts to recruit new officers to address this shortfall by holding 'back to back' recruitment and training drives throughout the year. Consequently many staff on duty at any one time had limited experience.
- The number of prisoners was increased during the year as the MoJ took the option to grant additional prisoner places (with a maximum of 946) for a period of months.
- The proportion of category B prisoners increased and during the year a MoJ reorganisation programme resulted in Lowdham Grange being moved into the Long Term High Security Directorate.
- The prison was designated 'smoke free' in September with consequent tension amongst prisoners.
- The use of PS appeared to increase during the year contributing to unpredictable and challenging behaviour.

As a consequence of this instability aspects of prisoner safety were put under a variety of strains as noted below. However, the Board also observed that the Director and his team made extensive efforts to put in place policies and practices which would mitigate these challenges.

#### **Serious Incidents:**

The Command Suite was opened to coordinate the management of 'serious incidents' on at least 25 occasions during the year, which is significantly more than in recent years. These included incidents at height (often prisoners balancing over the railings on wings), barricade incidents, violent incidents between groups of prisoners, concerted indiscipline by groups of prisoners and apparent hostage situations.

Most of these incidents have been observed by members of the Board and members have been impressed by the efficient, calm and humane way in which the incidents have been managed. Collaboration with other services such as Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue, East Midlands Ambulance Service and Nottinghamshire Police has also been noted. Prison managers use the support of the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG) when appropriate, for example they were called upon 3 times during September.

The support of the Long Term and High Security Directorate in transferring disruptive and troublesome prisoners has been a notable feature of the response to challenging incidents. The Board's perception of reasons for this increased instability is noted above.

#### **Security measures taken by the prison in the light of the above**

The Director and his staff have worked hard to minimise indiscipline and violence. Actions included:

- The introduction of a Violence Reduction Strategy. This involved the creation of a dedicated team to manage the strategy led by an Assistant Director. The team aim to

identify prisoners likely to be involved in anti-social or violent behaviour and put in place a multi-disciplinary, proactive approach to their management. The work of this team had some success during the year but was hampered by staff shortages and limited opportunities for collaborative working.

- The introduction of a 'Social Responsibility Unit' (SRU) on L wing. This involved some adaptation of the physical environment to provide a more secure space than a conventional wing, enhanced staffing levels, the close involvement of the Psychology Team and the recruitment of 2 specialist staff. The aim of the unit is to work with challenging prisoners in order to improve their behaviour. The unit was introduced in August 2017 but before all staffing appointments had been made. By the end of the reporting period a full complement of staff was in place. The Board are monitoring the operation and outcomes of the SRU and are keen to ensure that it does not become another segregation unit without the legal safeguards.
- The systematic use of intelligence to disrupt planned indiscipline by prisoners. For example, in September the Director enhanced staffing with the cooperation of Serco with the addition of PCOs from other prisons, deployed control dogs from other prisons and reorganised staff rotas to maximise supervision during movement as a result of intelligence reports of planned concerted disruption. As a result, no unmanageable incidents occurred.
- The prison has now recruited two control dogs for use at the prison.
- The Director prioritised recruitment and retention of staff. This has involved the appointment of a dedicated Recruitment and Retention manager (a seconded wing manager), successive recruitment and training programmes, and extension to the PCO training curriculum to 11 weeks, and a mentoring programme for new PCOs to enhance retention. The result of this work is that by end of the reporting period the prison almost had a full complement of PCOs.

### **The Safety of Prisoners**

Levels of violence between prisoners and, on occasions towards staff, were of concern to the Board. For example in July there were 33 assaults recorded. Injuries sustained by prisoners were sometimes quite serious and required hospital treatment. Assaults on staff were rarer but still occurred and sometimes required hospital treatment.

Body worn cameras were introduced for use by PCOs and other staff such as those in healthcare, it is hoped that these will act as a de-escalation tool. In addition extendable batons were introduced for use by PCO's.

The Measuring Quality of Prison Life survey of February 2017 gave ratings of 3 for 'decency' and 2 for 'safety'. The Board receives varying accounts from prisoners. Many feel safe but a small minority report concerns.

Concern about the personal safety of prisoners might best be illustrated by the increased number of prisoners subject to an ACCT during the year. Early in the reporting year a typical day would involve 22 or 23 prisoners on an ACCT. In September this rose to 36 by the end of the month. This may have been, at least in part, to do with the introduction of the smoking ban.

This rise in the number of ACCTs put extra pressure on staff and Board members received complaints from prisoners that their ACCTs were not always attended by healthcare or other key staff such as Psychology. Scrutiny of ACCT files confirms that this is sometimes the case.

The inexperience of some staff also led at least one officer to express concern about their ability to make effective decisions at ACCT Reviews. There were 4 prisoners on constant observations in December 2017, of whom 3 were on constant observations for 7 days.

During the autumn of 2017 Suicide and Self Harm Training (SASH) was launched for all staff, and to the end of the reporting period over 100 had attended. The Board were invited to attend sessions and observed it to be well delivered and valued by staff.

### **Prisoner Self Isolation**

The Board have observed an increasing number of prisoners who have chosen to isolate themselves by staying in their cells for prolonged periods, often emerging only to take meals. This was an issue involved in one of the two deaths in custody during the year. The Safer Custody Team have recognised this as a problem and have designed a strategy involving “reintegration plans” within the safer custody policy but this was not observed as widely implemented during the reporting period.

### **Drug Use**

Concern about the use of illicit drugs has continued during the year. The use of PS in particular has caused concern especially as those using the substance often display very unpredictable behaviour. PS was also believed to be involved in a death in custody during the year. This problem was exacerbated by a failure of the prison to fulfil the drug testing regime (MDT) expected by the contract.

The Director and his team have however taken a number of steps to try to limit the supply of these drugs. For example, using carefully gained intelligence and targeted cell searches a total of 14 mobile phones were seized from prisoners in September 2017. The careful screening of mail is also carried out regularly. It is a source of regret that the new body scanner obtained by the prison for a trial period has not yet been deployed due to the complexities of the law governing such use.

### **Deaths in Custody:**

There were two deaths in custody during the reporting period.

At the inquest into one of these deaths the Coroner noted the use of NPS. No Section 28 recommendations were made.

Members of the Board attended all five days of the inquest.

In the case of the second death the PPO report and subsequent inquest are awaited.

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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Equalities issues continue to be managed proactively and effectively at Lowdham Grange.

Data taken from PNOMIS provide the following information about the makeup of the population at Lowdham Grange:

- BME Population registered on PNOMIS - 46%
- Gypsy and Traveller group registered on PNOMIS 1%
- Total Number of prisoners registered as Foreign National 105 which equates to > 10%

The current figure for prisoners who have a disability recorded on PNOMIS is 228, which equates to 25% of the population of the prison.

### Religion

Muslim	C of E	RC	Budd	Other	Nil
26%	27%	18%	2%	6%	21%

### Age

21- 29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
33%	36%	19%	10%	2%

Sexual orientation recorded on PNOMIS at the time of writing this report

- Bi-Sexual / Gay 1%
- Heterosexual 89%
- Not Disclosed 10%

The Equalities Officer has high status and is well respected by staff and most prisoners. Issues raised by prisoners are investigated promptly and appropriate action is taken when warranted.

Board members have observed that a range of equality matters have been addressed including:

- The case of a prisoner with disabilities being moved from one wing to another to facilitate his attendance at a new work venue.
- The case of a particularly racist prisoner in the segregation unit being housed in a cell that minimised his ability to shout racist abuse towards prison wings.
- A prison wide strategy to manage appropriate meal arrangements for Ramadan which occurred during some of the longest days of the year. This was carefully planned in consultation with the Imams and prisoners.
- Black History Week featuring strongly in the prison and having a positive impact.

The arrangement in that named members of the Senior Management Team are linked to each of the Protected Characteristics ensures that the full range of matters are regularly considered.

## 6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

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At Lowdham Grange the Segregation Unit is called the Reintegration Unit (RIU)

This unit consists of 25 cells (including one observation cell and two 'special accommodation' cells), office, kitchen, showers and 3 separate exercise yards.

The conditions, facilities, staffing and management of the unit continue to be of a high standard, in the most challenging part of the prison.

The unit has been almost full to capacity for almost all of the reporting year. The Director has made numerous attempts to reduce the population of the Unit but the numbers have usually increased back to near full capacity. For example, by the start of July numbers in the unit reduced to 10 yet in September numbers averaged 21.

The Board monitors at least 98% of the Segregation Review Boards (SRB). The SRBs are held on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. All documentation is up to date and readily accessible to Board Members.

During the reporting year there has been a high number of difficult prisoners requiring three officer unlock to ensure the safety of staff. This has often been as high as a third of the population and in November reached 12 out of a total of 23 prisoners; this has substantially increased the workload of the Unit.

The care and support from staff in the RIU for the prisoners is to be commended often under very difficult working conditions

The Board speaks to each prisoner in the unit weekly. The Board is advised when prisoners are taken into the Unit and also of the use of special accommodation, food refusal, and dirty protests.

The Board notes that in the reporting period there have been 12 dirty protests.

During the reporting period there was a change of Manager for the Unit.

It is of some concern to the Board that training for such a challenging role appears to be limited. The Unit is well managed but there have been numerous occasions when the staffing levels have been low given the nature and number of prisoners housed in the Unit.

The manager of the Unit also chairs the SRB. It is debateable whether a Custodial Manager of the RIU has the necessary independence required of a SRB Chair.

The Board also notes that, as the prison holds a multi- disciplinary meeting each Friday, to review prisoners held in the RIU, the decision to continue to hold in segregation is made at this meeting and not by the Chair of the SRB acting independently.

Longer term management of prisoners with complex mental health conditions creates significant increases in the workload for all of those involved.

The Board also notes that at the first 72 hour SRB the Chair of the SRB sometimes does not always know the full reasons for the initial segregation other than what is written on the Initial Authority to Segregate Form. This is particularly apparent when the reason for segregation is security based.

Whilst the Board is satisfied that at the 42 day and 84 day time limits the required authority from the Deputy Director of Custody is obtained, it has serious concerns over the length of time some of the prisoners are being held in segregation whilst transfers or alternative provision is secured for them.

<b>Days In Segregation</b>	<b>Start of year February 2017</b>	<b>End of year January 2018</b>
Over 42 days	3 prisoners	2 Prisoners
Over 100 days	1 prisoner (117 days)	1 prisoner (105 days)
	1 prisoner (194 days)	1 prisoner (114 days)
Over 200 days		1 prisoner (247 days)

Almost all of the prisoners held for over 100 days during the reporting period were judged by Healthcare to have complex mental health needs and required transfer to a specialist unit.

The Board feels that it cannot be right to hold prisoners in segregation for over 100 days and we do not believe that this constitutes humane and decent treatment

HMPPS could address this situation by ensuring that Governors and Directors of prisons more readily accept transfers of prisoners within their category, and by facilitating the movement of suitable prisoners to specialist care/treatment.

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

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Accommodation at Lowdham Grange continues to be of a generally high standard.

All cells in the 14 wings at Lowdham Grange have in-cell toilet and washing facilities and 6 of the wings have in-cell showers. All cells have the facility for in-cell telephones and the vast majority of prisoners have a telephone for their personal use although the numbers available are restricted and monitored.

Each wing has at least two electronic terminals on which prisoners make their menu choices, book medical appointments and contact their Offender Supervisor.

Food is cooked in a central kitchen and transferred to wings in heated trollies for distribution from wing serveries. During the reporting year the prison introduced an electronic 'tug' to tow these trollies to the wings. This has increased the efficiency of food distribution and helped ensure food is generally hot when delivered to the wing.

Menus for the day include reasonable choice (e.g. usually 3 or 4 choices of a hot meal for the main meal of the day). Complaints about food are relatively rare.

The standard of cleanliness of wings is variable. At best some wings are pristine with shining floors and well cared for furniture. However, there are wings which are less clean and occasionally appear scruffy. When this has been reported by the Board action to improve matters has usually been swift and effective.

Laundry is carried out on individual wings in machines provided and is the responsibility of individual prisoners. This has sometimes caused concern for prisoners who 'lose' items of clothing while they are off the wing for work, education or other reasons.

Maintenance of the building is undertaken by an on-site team employed by SERCO. This team are observed to be very effective and building defects or damage are rectified promptly. The grounds of the prison are very well maintained by a team of prisoners. Only occasional build-up of litter outside some wings mars this high standard.

The management of prison property has continued to cause concern for the Board. Items lost in transit between prisons are a frequent occurrence and records pertaining to such items are often difficult to locate.

Internally, property management is also problematic. Prisoners frequently have difficulty locating their stored property or gaining officer support for visiting the store. This matter is currently being addressed by a seconded senior manager and the Board hope for improvements in the coming year. During the reporting year 54 applications relating to this issue have been received and followed up by the Board.

The Board has received and followed up a complaint about the inability of prisoners to access laptop computers to enable the preparation of papers for an appeal.

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

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The delivery and quality of Healthcare and Mental Health Services has been an important priority for the IMB in the reporting period. A dedicated group has worked to develop and implement improved monitoring systems.

### **CONTEXT**

There have been significant management changes in the Prison during this reporting period; a new Director took up his post in November 2016 and a new Head of Healthcare commenced in January 2017. The two have developed an excellent working relationship that has led to open, constructive discussion and innovations that are starting to improve services to prisoners whilst taking into account the need to use prison resources effectively.

The focus on healthcare has enabled the IMB to become engaged with all the initiatives being taken throughout the year and the Board are pleased to report that our issues of concern have also been recognised as such by the NHS, the Prison and the Health and Social Care Needs Assessment Report of January 2018 (HSCNA) that was commissioned by NHS England and the Health and Justice Team.

A risk register has been established to enable strategies to be established and monitored for the most problematic areas of concern.

It should be noted that Lowdham Grange became 'smoke-free' in September 2017 with some disruption. However, the IMB observed the management of this as the successful result of the prison and NHS working in close co-operation and partnership.

### **SUMMARY OF CONCERNS & ACTIONS**

#### **Healthcare Premises**

The building in which the majority of services are delivered is viewed by the Board as being unfit for purpose. This view was endorsed by the HSCNA report and visiting MP and Junior Minister Philip Lee, who is also a working GP. The prison and NHS have made every possible effort to improve the environment but it remains inadequate (originally designed for a prison population of 600) and unpleasant for both prisoners and staff.

A case of need and initial design option are now being developed in conjunction with the Health and Justice Team and it is hoped joint funding will be made available.

#### **Staffing**

Recruitment and retention of staff remains challenging (and clearly not helped by a very poor working environment).

The IMB noted that the service has been pro-actively recruiting and vacancies have been used as opportunities to make changes to improve the way services are delivered and address areas of concern. At the end of the reporting period staffing levels were felt to be adequate.

Prison staff shortages also have an impact on prisoner healthcare, particularly when access to Healthcare is compromised by a shortage of escorts. The Board has noted that the impact of escort issues with costs being monitored closely and practices being introduced to improve internal attendance numbers and, where possible, reduce the need for escorts to external appointments. These include the use of remote diagnostics, arranging mobile x-ray/scanning sessions and developing internal services.

Mental Health team improvements have been sustained and a 2017 Peer Review of services (attended by the IMB) produced a favourable report. A new Mental Health Matron has recently been appointed.

### **Night Cover**

This cover is not part of the NHS contract but has been provided by the NHS using agency staff. The IMB have expressed concern about this and a case is being made for the Health and Justice team to make a contract variation to secure this service.

### **Pharmacy**

The IMB had noted that there was a degree of prisoner dissatisfaction with the administration of medications and targeted the service for an in-depth monitoring process. From this review it emerged that the main storage area is not a suitable environment and there is very limited storage available on the Wings to facilitate administration of medications.

A surveyor's report has been commissioned to indicate what remedial action can be taken to improve the main storage area. Discussions are taking place about the ways in which administration on the Wings might be improved.

### **Prisoner Perceptions**

A monthly Healthcare PIAC meeting has taken place for a number of years but is poorly attended and those Wing representatives who do attend report that prisoners do not feel their concerns are taken seriously. Some changes to the structure of the meetings have been made but attendance and interest remains poor.

### **Complaints Handling**

The IMB had been concerned that, since the NHS had taken over the service, it had not been able to gain any information about the numbers and types of complaints being received. The way in which complaints are being recorded, tracked and processed has been streamlined. The IMB can now gain access to routine complaint reporting information and pursue its own prisoner applications in co-operation with the service.

### **Lengths of Stay in RIU**

Some prisoners awaiting transfer to Mental Health Units are spending unacceptable lengths of time in segregation. In 2017 the IMB Chair wrote to the Minister in support of the efforts being made by the prison to find a suitable location for one prisoner.

## **EVIDENCE**

### **External Reports**

- the Health and Social Care Needs Assessment Report of January 2018
- Quality Network Peer Review of Mental Health Services 2017

### **Healthcare Meetings**

The IMB is in attendance at the following meetings throughout the year:

- Monthly Health PIAC
- Quarterly Integrated Healthcare Contract Review Meeting
- Bi-monthly meeting between Head of Healthcare and IMB member

## **Provision of Performance & Quality indicators**

The IMB is committed to taking an evidence based approach to support its Healthcare monitoring activities and welcomes the development of the Health and Justice Indicators (HJIPs) to use alongside other Quality and Monitoring systems. However, the Board is disappointed that no narrative is being provided with the data set that is considered at the Contract Review meetings and at the Q3 meeting there was no representative of Contracts and Performance to assist with the interpretation of the data.

The use of HJIPs is still at an early stage and, already, they have revealed shortcomings in data collection in the Prison. These are currently being addressed locally but the IMB hopes that the Ministry of Justice provides support at all levels to ensure that robust data is available to the Service.

## 9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

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Education at Lowdham Grange is provided by staff employed and managed by SERCO. Staffing levels are good and a wide range of courses are on offer to prisoners. During the year prisoners accessed almost 100 different courses at levels from Entry 3 to first degree level.

These courses include:

- Functional Skills (Entry level 3 to Level 2)
- GCSE and A Level English and Maths
- Vocational courses in Music IT, Industrial Cleaning, Business, Domestic Appliance Repair and Catering.
- Sport and Leisure qualifications
- Social Responsibility courses.

In addition to these courses the prison have collaborated with Nottingham Trent University to mount a course involving prisoners and students working together to explore judicial and custodial issues. This was observed by the Board to be a particularly impressive course and is being repeated with a different cohort of prisoners and students. We believe that this is 'ground breaking' course which gives prisoners an insight into higher education.

Sport and Leisure courses via the 'Sports Academy' have successfully prepared several prisoners for life after release and some have gone on to successful business involvement as a result.

It is particularly pleasing to note that 5 prisoners graduated from the Open University during the period.

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

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As a Category B Training Prison work employment and training are a core part of life at Lowdham Grange.

The prison has some impressive workshop facilities which provide for the production of such items as furniture, textile products and electrical components. Prisoners generally value work in these areas and many placements are seen as desirable.

As mentioned in the Education section, vocational training in such things as 'white goods' repair is also provided at Lowdham.

Other work is provided for prisoners in the form of wing cleaning, food preparation and serving and the new venture of manning a small call-centre facility.

Despite these provisions the Board have been concerned about the number of prisoners who are apparently unemployed. Members have noted significant numbers of prisoners (sometimes as many as two thirds of the wing population) apparently without employment and unlocked on wings during the core day. This is a challenging situation for officers to manage and contributes to prison instability.

On investigation it is revealed that:

- An average of approximately 130 prisoners were designated 'unemployed' in most months.
- A significant number of prisoners were employed on a 'part time' basis.
- Approximately 70 vacancies for employment were recorded on most months.
- Some wings had large numbers of nominated wing cleaners but there was little supervision of their working hours.
- The allocation of work places has long been managed by the Work Allocation Board but it appears that this board has not functioned very effectively during recent years. Some prisoners have complained to the IMB of a slow process of work allocation and apparently illogical decisions being made.
- The link between employment and education was not always as effective as it should be. For example the requirement for all prisoners to achieve at least Entry Level 3 in basic skills before being employed has not always been adhered to. This meant that a powerful incentive to engage in basic education was diminished.

### **Action by the prison to improve provision**

During the reporting year the Director arranged for the secondment of his Deputy in order for him to undertake a detailed review of Work across the prison. The report is a detailed and impressive piece of work and is underpinned by a 19 point action plan for improvement in the provision, quality and monitoring of Purposeful Activity.

Action on improvement began during the autumn and is ongoing. It is expected that purposeful activity levels will increase during the coming year.

## **11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION**

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As noted elsewhere in the report most of the prisoners at Lowdham Grange are serving long or indeterminate sentences.

The Board notes that the Offender Management Unit offers an effective level of support to prisoners at the various stages of their sentences and sentence planning appears good.

A number of Offender Behaviour Programmes are used at the prison, including running the new Kaizen programme which is an accredited offender behaviour programme. The Board noted in November 2017 that the first graduates of the programme in England and Wales were from Lowdham Grange. The prison also continues to offer an effective 'Pro Social Modelling' course which promotes positive socialisation.

As a Training Prison Lowdham Grange is not usually expected to release prisoners at the end of their sentence.

Every effort is made to transfer prisoners to a prison local to their home in the period prior to their release date to enable effective planning and liaison with other agencies. This has not always proved to be possible for a variety of reasons including capacity at Local or Resettlement establishments.

During the reporting year 25 prisoners were released into the community from Lowdham Grange. Where this has occurred the prison strived to ensure that such prisoners are linked to local agencies in order to support their successful reintegration into society.

## B Section – Work of Board

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At the start of the reporting year all members of the Board attended training sessions organised ‘in house’ to understand and develop the way in which it would implement the new National Framework. As a result, the Rota visits have become more systematic and the evidence collected has been used extensively to inform the Board’s work and to compile the Annual Report for 2017/8.

The Board agreed that as well as carrying out its Statutory Roles, the 3 main areas of focus would be:

Safety

Healthcare

Segregation

Board members have worked in small groups to understand and observe these areas of the Prison in more detail. Issues identified by these groups are reported on in the Evidence sections of the report.

During the reporting year an issue concerning the wellbeing of a Prisoner who had been held in Segregation for over 200 days was felt to be so serious that the Board, having ascertained that all possible action had been taken by the Prison, wrote to the Minister to seek support for an appropriate move to another establishment.

The Board has established a very professional relationship with the Director and his Senior management team, where there has been quite a lot of change during the reporting year. The Board have an excellent working relationship with the Ministry of Justice Controller, and her team.

During the reporting year visits by members of the Board have been made to HMP Dovegate, HMP Ranby and HMP Nottingham. From each visit the Board gained a greater understanding of other establishments, and have implemented some new procedures to improve the monitoring at Lowdham Grange.

Board members attended all 5 days of the Inquest into a Death in Custody reported in the 2016/7 Report at Nottingham Coroners Court.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	<b>16</b>
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	<b>16</b>
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	<b>13</b>
Total number of visits to the Establishment	<b>578</b>
Total number of segregation reviews attended	<b>152</b>

## Section - Applications

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>	<b>Year 2016-17</b>
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	0	3
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	5	3
C	Equality	7	9
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	18	9
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	20	19
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	4	10
F	Food and kitchens	1	5
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	35	24
H 1	Property within this establishment	54	45
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	62	42
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	1
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	7	13
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	39	14
K	Transfers	7	7
L	Miscellaneous	31	23
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>229</b>
	<b>Plus Confidential Access</b>	<b>23</b>	