



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

at

**HMP Channings Wood**

for reporting year  
**1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018**

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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>6</b>

### Evidence Sections

<b>4</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Equality and Fairness</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Segregation/Care and Separation Unit</b>	<b>12</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>18</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Work, Vocational Training and Employment</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Resettlement Preparation</b>	<b>21</b>

	<b>The Work of the IMB</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>Applications to the IMB</b>	<b>24</b>

## **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.

#### **1a INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT**

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Channings Wood for the period 01/09/17 to 31/08/18. IMB evidence comes from observations made during visits, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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During the period of this report, the HMP Channings Wood IMB welcomes the improved overall staffing levels in the prison, though we are concerned at the evident lack of experience resulting from so many new officers. The significant numbers of new staff, and the diminution of the critical mass of experienced officers as they retire or leave for other jobs, has had a detrimental effect on the overall running of the establishment. Parallel to this, the Senior Management Team has experienced constant disruption and change and only in the closing months of the reporting period has been up to full strength.

The long-term consequences of the smoking ban have become ever more apparent as the addictive and often dangerous nature of Spice has been evident in a large part of the prison. Its easy availability at HMP Channings Wood is often commented on by prisoners coming from other parts of the estate. Despite numerous preventative strategies – and some significant successes – it has continued to assert an insidious hold over many men, creating a culture of debt, bullying and violence which has on occasion spread to prisoners' families outside.

The general fabric of buildings continues to be of great concern. We note the improvements in decoration of the interiors, but when floors are lifting through damp, showers frankly unhygienic, rooms out of action due to broken windows and leaking roofs with unsafe electrics, such improvements can only ever be cosmetic. Basic furniture is in very short supply and often badly damaged. Many rooms remain unused due to a lack of basic furnishings such as tables and chairs. Too often the immediate areas surrounding the living blocks are covered with rubbish thrown from cells.

We regret the lack of opportunities for prisoners to work outside the prison walls in communities around the prison. We fully understand there are often security implications, but the opportunities are there and the significant effect on the men's rehabilitation must mean this is an initiative worth driving forward.

Finally, we are aware that significant efforts have been put into improving the many problems that the Governing Governor faced on taking over HMP Channings Wood half-way through the turbulent period covered by this Annual Report. We are grateful for the way in which we have kept abreast of these changes and will assiduously monitor and report back on the degree to which he succeeds during the coming year.

**Gerald Hine-Haycock**  
**Chair of the IMB at HMP Channings Wood.**

**December 2018.**

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## **Main Areas for Development**

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### **TO THE MINISTER**

Whilst we welcome the improvement in mental health provision, it still tends to be largely reactive and too often ignores fundamental and enduring psychological issues. Given the current understanding about mental health as a national concern, it's not surprising that so many prisoners suffer from disturbing behaviour that ranges from the overtly challenging to self-isolation and the withdrawal from life around them.

**Will the Minister give priority to the urgent provision of psychotherapeutic help that meets the needs of all prisoners? This can only enhance their chances of rejoining society as productive citizens, and better understanding their own behaviour and reactions.**

### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

The doubling-up in cells in LB1, traditionally the VPs and sex offenders block, has created many serious problems around decency and security, including the widespread use of NPS. This creates constant stressful situations for staff and prisoners.

**What plans does the Prison Service have to reduce numbers in LB1 in order to create an environment on this living block that all involved will consider to be safe, humane and decent?**

### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

1 - Officers are still reporting a lack of immediate emotional support from senior staff following traumatic incidents at the prison.

**Will the Governor ensure that such support is both regular, mandatory and timely so officers will be reassured they will always be helped to deal with the stress their work entails?**

2 - Innovative schemes such as Belief in Change and Men Supporting Men have provided much-needed opportunities for prisoners to learn new skills in a creative atmosphere. We regret they have been withdrawn on financial or staffing grounds.

**What does the prison management intend to replace these valuable schemes with, given that the prisoners enthusiastically embraced them and they were often the only outlet for creativity among the men?**

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

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HMP Channings Wood is a medium-sized Category “C” training and resettlement prison in a rural area of south Devon close to Newton Abbot. Its population fluctuates at around 700, a large proportion of whom are considered vulnerable due to the nature of their offences.

It has limited access by public transport, with no public transport on Sundays.

Offenders’ accommodation is split into two separate areas: the main wings – LB2, LB3, LB4 and the Vulnerable Prisoner Unit – LB1, LB5 and LB7. The last two house enhanced prisoners. LB8 is the induction block and LB6 is the resettlement wing. There is also a Segregation/Care and Separation Unit with eight residential and two holding cells, plus accommodation for disciplinary hearings. No building is higher than two stories. The grounds are spacious, well-landscaped, with some attractive gardens. Five of the living blocks are designed around a central entrance area with offices, classrooms, a servery and two association rooms. All the cells are off four corridors on each wing, two corridors on each floor, are arranged at right-angles to each other and around two corners from the main area. Thus, all the activity in and around the cells is around corners and some distance from the main offices. Although there are wing offices in these areas, the main staff work and relaxation areas are separate from the cells, a feature which has been identified as a factor which inhibits staff/prisoner relationships on a number of levels. It also provides hidden areas making any time out of cell difficult for staff to supervise.

With the exception of LB8 which has double-occupancy cells with en-suite showers, all of the living blocks have single-occupancy cells, though LB1 has been adapted with bunk beds for dual occupancy. These blocks have communal showers on each landing. Extra razor wire has been installed at points prone to roof-top protests – though other areas have become more vulnerable.

The kitchen provides catering, including special dietary meals, to the living blocks by means of heated trolleys from which food is served.

Contained within the perimeter fence are a sports field and an area that is used for horticulture. The whole is contained within a large perimeter fence, most of which is accessible on the outside to the general public.

Education and vocational courses are provided by Weston College, the Resettlement Group, Catch 22, JobCentrePlus and Prospects, which is concerned with careers guidance. Psychology is regionally managed across the Devon cluster (HMPs Channings Wood, Dartmoor and Exeter) and oversees offending behaviour courses. SMS is contracted to Care UK.

Healthcare is provided by Care UK from 01 April 2017. There are no in-patient beds. Nurses are on duty every day and out of hours GP service is provided by Devon Doctors.

The prison has a gym which has a well-equipped fitness suite and sports hall which can be used for a variety of team games. There are also facilities for showering and office accommodation. Appropriate equipment for sporting activities such as badminton and basketball are also available.

There is a multi-faith chapel available for use of all prisoners and staff. Faiths which have members to support their denomination are Roman Catholic priest, Anglican minister and imam. Followers of other faiths catered for, include Pagans and Jews.

## **4 SAFETY**

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### **Bullying and violence reduction**

It is regrettable that once again the IMB has to report that incidents of both bullying and violence have increased during the year and that assaults prisoner on prisoner rose to a peak of 18 during May 2018. Both prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff assaults have failed to meet the prison's targets. Additionally, prisoners regularly report their concerns regarding personal safety and the prisoners' perception of "feeling safe" is also significantly falling short of target.

The IMB have attended just one fewer serious incidents this year, 15 compared to 16 for the same period last year, although it appears that the Board has not always been informed when incidents have occurred. All but one of these incidents have occurred between January and August 2018.

The Board notes that the number of prisoners being re-categorised and transferred to B establishments has increased since early summer this year, due to a more robust approach to victim reduction.

Whilst the number of offenders on basic level has fluctuated throughout the year, dipping in January to 2%, but rising again by April to 7%, the current number is 50 (7.7%). This mostly relates to retaliation and debt issues and/or the use of NPS.

Adjudications have increased significantly from an average of 10 offences per day in 2017 to an average of 15 per day (+33%) so far this year. Again, many relate to debt and possession of illicit substances. The Board notes that the Visiting Judge has now had to increase her sessions from one to two per month.

The introduction of body cameras for officers last year was a sensible addition to managing individuals' safety. After some initial reluctance by the POA, the scheme is becoming embedded now and 68.5% of directly-employed staff in the prison have been trained on their use - this includes most of the uniformed officers. In addition, the FMI (Five Minute Intervention) training has been received by 170 staff to date. Its roll-out has mainly been to the uniformed officers thus far. Officers report that FMI has seen an improvement in the immediate management and defusing of some situations, especially on the living blocks. The use of force trends, which are minimal and appear proportionate, reflect this.

## **Self-harm and suicide prevention**

Self-harm incidents have also fluctuated throughout the year, but remain a key concern of the Board. Active self-harming was at its lowest in December at 1%, but rose again to 3.5% in May/June this year. The majority of incidents continue to be cutting, but it is to be noted that the number of acts of ligaturing has increased significantly. The number of first-time self-harmers dipped slightly in the summer of 2017, but peaked in December 2017 and again in March 2018. The number of prisoners self-harming on open ACCTs peaked steeply to 50 (including prisoners transferred into the prison) by June 2018. There has been a spike in the age range of those 20-30 years old self-harming, but also a gradual increase amongst the 31-40 year-old age group as well. The number of active self-harmers being transferred into the prison appears also to have risen e.g.12 in the month of May.

There have been five deaths in custody during this reporting period; two by natural causes and the other three self-inflicted. An additional number of prisoners have required resuscitation and hospitalisation following the use of NPS and/or self-harm acts during the year. At one stage, officers were reporting that medical intervention connected with NPS was required on a daily basis.

Prisoners with Safer Custody roles are under-represented and currently the team is recruiting two new members. They mostly work with prisoners on open ACCTs and some of those with substance misuse issues. They report the instability on LB1 especially and that many men placed there feel unsafe, are bullied or have experienced some incidents of violence, a situation which is also regularly reported to the IMB through applications and new prisoners on induction. The Board notes that the number of formal applications received concerning prisoners' personal safety issues during the year has been 35, but much informal feedback has been received by the Board reporting prisoners' anxieties regarding feeling unsafe.

Listeners in the prison are continuing to be responsive to prisoners' needs and reported that their call outs were 161 in the six-month period January to July 2018, citing mental health issues being the majority of prisoners' concerns. There is currently a recruitment campaign in place to enhance the number of Listeners across the prison, with another ten required on VPU and four on Mains. The IMB are pleased to learn that Listeners are receiving safeguarding training from the Samaritans at this time.

The IMB is especially concerned about the number of ACCTs that have been opened throughout the year, rising to 247 from January to July (compared to 238 for the same period 2017), which includes offenders housed in the Segregation Unit.

The Board has, therefore, since January 2018 introduced a more robust process of monitoring ACCT reviews and the associated documentation, but feel it is regrettable that plans to improve the management of ACCTs across the prison still require further work.

The number of prisoners self-isolating has also risen this year and was 14 during the month of June. Debt and NPS appear to be the prime reasons for self-isolating - mainly amongst offenders on LB3 and LB4, some of whom have been transferred out of the VP wing, LB1, following reports of threatening and bullying behaviour.

The prison put a safeguarding policy in place in June 2017 which is currently under revision so the IMB are unable to comment on its effectiveness at this time.

## **Security**

The prison is gaining a greater awareness of the significant ringleaders involved with the trade of illicit substances, the production of hooch, redirection of medication and the associated violence and bullying. However, the management of these issues remains

inconsistent. During the year, problems with hooch seem to have reduced noticeably, probably due to the easier access to Spice.

Staff shortages and levels of sickness have improved during the year, but the number of new and less experienced staff (less than 12 months) now stands at 33.3%. This puts extra pressure on more experienced officers.

The introduction of the Violence Reduction Action Plan on 01 May 2017 has now been superseded by CSiP.

CSiP was launched in the prison in May 2018 and aims to enhance the reporting and management of violence. The Complex Case Review meetings have been strengthened and currently are reviewing around eleven prisoners regularly (including those held in segregation), plus any who are self-isolating,

There has also been an increase in the number of prisoners that have been held on constant watch, totalling seven, some of whom have been on constant watch for a significant length of time. This is a reflection of the level of very serious mental health issues amongst offenders in the prison.

### **Substance misuse**

The IMB expresses extreme concern regarding the presence and use of illegal substances which has escalated throughout the year. It still appears to be very easy to obtain drugs in the prison, which may be indicative of the difficulties in managing the layout of the estate, visitors and paper communications arriving within the prison. A prisoner has reported to the IMB that "having been an inmate in a large number of prisons, Channings Wood was the worst I have come across in the easy accessibility to drugs". The cost of obtaining NPS is now reported to be cheaper than tobacco. Much of the use of NPS is confined to behind cell doors, often in multiple groups. However, the illicit trade of tobacco and the associated bullying and debt remains alarming.

Distribution of nicotine patches continues as required and prisoners have access to the smoking cessation programme. The inclusion of all the south-west prisons in the scheme has now positively impacted on the previous situation, to the extent that the IMB have received no applications relating to smoking cessation in the last six months.

The healthcare provider, Care UK, in conjunction with the prison, is tackling the issues of prisoners bullying behaviour whilst waiting for their medication, especially against the most vulnerable, elderly and disabled offenders on LB5, by having an officer in attendance and supervising the queue during medication clinics.

The IMB has been pleased to see the introduction of the new drug recovery programmes in November 2017 which are proving to be more flexible than previous approaches. The Board is also pleased to report that the SMS department is now fully staffed with eight recovery workers plus two support workers. Attendance at sessions had been pretty poor around Christmas and the beginning of this year but has now improved to above 80%. However, accommodation for the session on LB4 is largely inappropriately resourced and is in need of improvement. It is noted that there is a plan in place to appoint peer mentors to support the SMS department in the near future and this is to be welcomed.

### **Transfers and early days in custody**

A dedicated induction wing for mains prisoners, LB8, has been effected with greatly improved morale amongst prisoners and staff, as well as being a safer environment with fewer instances of bullying. Prisoners remain here for, on average, two to three weeks whilst they are assessed and allocated work, where appropriate, before being relocated to other living blocks. At times this living unit is used to accommodate high-risk prisoners to ease congestion in the

segregation unit and elsewhere, but this has a detrimental effect on the atmosphere and should be avoided. The VP prisoners have no dedicated induction wing and as a result are subjected to bullying and NPS exposure immediately they enter the prison. This has to be addressed. LB8 has also been affected by the requirement to take former LB1 prisoners.

Prisoners arriving are generally in good shape and are offered a hot drink as soon as they are housed in Reception to await processing. The staff are very positive and welcoming and ensure, wherever possible, that any immediate issues are resolved. There are Listeners and others in attendance to explain the induction process and introduce them to how the prison works. Staff deal with each prisoner individually, taking care that the induction process is thoroughly conducted, particularly noting when personal possessions have not arrived.

Property lost in transit creates further stress for prisoners and additional work for prison staff and the IMB. Frequently, newly-arrived prisoners do not have items essential for their wellbeing. Occasionally, prisoners are not notified that some personal possessions are being withheld – mainly for security reasons. This has resulted in considerable extra work for the IMB when applications are made to the Board.

Money and canteen are also an issue at induction as the cashiers work flexible hours with no cover between 15:30 on Fridays and 10:00 on Mondays. The catalogue clerk only works two days per week, so a 10-day process to receive canteen items often overruns for new prisoners.

The time taken to process prisoners can be lengthy due to the volume of movements, especially as many transports have to exchange several prisoners in a maximum 50-minute time period. In the year to July, Reception, which is often under pressure, processed 526 new prisoners in and 729 out in addition to over 850 prisoners attending hospitals or court appearances, all of whom have to be processed through Reception.

## **5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**

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New prisoners go through a comprehensive induction process that includes a time slot for IMB members to explain the IMB's role in prison operations, including how to bring concerns to the attention of the Board. There had been a substantial backlog in processing prison complaints, but the current clerk's efficiency and effectiveness has resulted in virtually all complaints being handled within the five-day stipulation. Over the past year, the number of complaints to the IMB has fluctuated significantly, with a general downward trend. This situation is similarly reflected in the experience of the prison's complaints process.

The establishment has an Equality Action Plan (EAP), but meetings to monitor its progress have not been regular and sometimes rearranged at short notice. Two part-time officers joined the Equalities Officer, but the demands of varying shift patterns, as well as sickness absence, did not result in adequate dedicated staff time. Staff have been hindered by ongoing problems with the software supporting the Equality Monitoring Tool. At the time of writing, recruitment is underway as the Equalities Officer had been promoted and the other staff were no longer carrying out equalities duties. The ongoing lack of staff assigned to equalities is of significant concern to the Board. It is essential that new staff are able to rapidly access appropriate training on appointment, and their roles ring-fenced.

There are representatives for BAME, Travellers, Chaplaincy, LGBT and Healthcare who attend the EAP meetings. Forums for each minority group are planned, but sometimes do not take

place when officers are unavailable. There is currently no specific group for men with disabilities, but disabilities have been dealt with alongside age. The establishment of a specific group will be an improvement.

The majority of living blocks have washing facilities that are in a very poor condition. There is a lack of privacy screens in many of the showers cubicles and often they have a step which impedes access. There are plans to upgrade them, but this is not close to completion meaning that men with mobility issues have to endure very poor facilities.

The number of DIRFs has dropped, but there is no evidence to know whether this was due to issues being dealt with, or an unwillingness to use the system.

There are around 35 foreign nationals from about 20 countries, some awaiting deportation. A recent request has been made to explore the possible use of technology to enable men who receive no visits to maintain contact with their families.

Most religious services operate with main and vulnerable prisoners being segregated, which adds to the demands on the Chaplaincy's capacity. It is hoped that more services could be integrated, which would free up staff to undertake other duties. The Managing Chaplain will explore the possibility of gaining some administrative support. After a long period with a part time imam who was travelling a considerable distance, a local imam has been recruited. He will attend all Friday prayers, which will be a significant improvement. It had been difficult to recruit a Church of England priest, but this issue has been solved by using two lay Anglicans.

A recent review of levels of prisoners' pay has been undertaken, including benchmarking with prisons of the same category nationally, and other prisons in the region. This revealed that men at Channings Wood are paid well, so no general increases were required. Work that leads to educational qualifications or is directly linked to resettlement will have higher rates. Occasional bonuses that are paid are a welcome and appreciated inducement.

There is a national review of IEP policy underway which will be implemented when completed. In the meantime, a local review of IEP systems is being carried out.

## **Visits**

Visits generally meet the required one hour in duration. However, the way that visitors are booked in on arrival is a cause for annoyance and frustration by both visitors and prisoners. This is done on a 'first come first served' basis, resulting in some visitors arriving several hours before the actual start of the visit, which is a great inconvenience, especially for those with young children, and people with learning or other disabilities. Although an hour is mandatory, the visiting time is stated as one-and-a-half hours and two issues in particular that impact on the actual time men spend with their visitors lead to frustration. Visitors strongly expressed their perception that the VPU prisoners are unfairly favoured because they are the first to be taken to the Visits Hall. This was explained by staff as being due to security/logistical requirements. Men on main wings have to wait until a phone call is received on their block and are then accompanied to the Visits Hall, resulting in variation in the time they get with their visitors. Those with experience of other prisons say that this is unique to Channings Wood.

Choices provide much valued support for families during visits. They also work with prisoners and through-the-gate services. Family visits continue to be limited in the number of men who can receive them and in duration. It would be a great improvement if it were possible to extend the scope of family visits, particularly in school holidays.

## **The IMB Board**

Recruitment of new members to fill Board vacancies has been undertaken, with three successful candidates who will start in the next reporting period. However, despite efforts it has not proved possible to increase the diversity of membership, and it is under-represented by age and ethnicity.

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

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There have been three different governors with responsibility for the Segregation Unit during the year, as well as a staff rotation of more than 50% halfway through. This has resulted in little continuity and, more importantly, virtually no progress in implementing the necessary strategic changes. There is a perception of the unit as the 'departure lounge', whereby prisoners wanting a transfer out still believe that a rooftop, or other serious misdemeanour, will take them to segregation and then on to another prison. The segregation staff are diligent and sensitive to the needs of the prisoners and do make every effort to listen to their concerns, taking action when possible.

Detailed statistics on the usage of the Segregation Unit have not been recorded since 2015, which makes analysis of the purpose of segregation, length of stay etc impossible. Most concerning is a lack of record of those prisoners isolated due to or with mental health problems, particularly those on an ACCT. The use of the algorithm and paper records of each prisoner has met inspection requirements and the current staff have all been trained in the systems. Once again, we commend the humanity and skill with which the officers handle some extremely difficult cases and episodes in this unit.

There has been another suspected suicide attempt in the Segregation Unit, using a ligature, which is still under investigation.

The Segregation Unit remains almost constantly full, with many prisoners often staying for considerable periods due to debt. These prisoners refuse to return to their wing for fear of reprisals, or have mental health issues which make them too high a risk in the main living blocks. There are few establishments which can and are willing to take them. There has been an increase in the number of very difficult, dangerous and disruptive prisoners in the unit, several of whom have been re-categorised then removed. Many of the prisoners in the unit are there as a result of using or supplying NPS which remains a critical issue in the prison. The lack of capacity has resulted in many prisoners who had taken part in roof-top protests having to be simply returned to their original locations.

The IMB have witnessed a prisoner in the Segregation Unit who took NPS whilst he was segregated which is, again, extremely concerning.

The fabric of the segregation block is very poor with many cells subjected to damage by prisoners, poorly maintained shower and exercise facilities. The floor surface in the entrance has lifted and in our view is a health and safety hazard as well as having a very poor

appearance. An experiment of Restorative Justice has seen a prisoner repaint his cell, after damaging it, rather than an immediate adjudication. The new Governing Governor is keen to extend this approach, which the Board supports.

Members regularly attend reviews which are carried out in a sensitive and timely manner with a representative of Care UK always present. Too many reviews are, however, still being scheduled for days when IMB members cannot attend.

The adjudications we attend are procedurally correct and we are always supportive of the judgement reached.

There are no privacy curtains in the cells and the use of CCTV cameras is sometimes an issue with prisoners wanting privacy to use the toilet. Although the staff are sensitive to this issue, it is not a wholly satisfactory arrangement. Occasionally, CCTV has failed or prisoners have covered their cell cameras.

We always have access to the prisoners and are able to have a private conversation if appropriate.

Dirty protests are dealt with swiftly and efficiently, but cells that are physically damaged take considerably longer to return to service. The situation has not been helped by the uncertainty over repairs following the demise of Carillion, which can leave the Segregation Unit short of cells for several days.

There are regularly large numbers, in excess of 20, of prisoners who are self-isolating behind their door on the living blocks and it has proved very difficult to obtain details of who they are, where they are and why they are self-isolating. This is of great concern to the IMB, as we would wish to see them to ensure that they are safe and if there is any support they need. The prison, seemingly, accepts this situation as acceptable, particularly so as the Segregation Unit is generally full and there is no alternative place to which they can be relocated. There have been cases where it has been several days before prison staff have become aware that a prisoner is self-isolating. The IMB finds this extremely worrying.

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

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It is the perception of the Board, derived from comments and observations, that Carillion's tenure of the care and management of HMP Channings Wood's fabric was less than successful. The establishment continued to deteriorate over that period and now significant parts of the prison are in a very poor state of repair. For example, the entrance to the Segregation Unit, the LB3 servery, parts of the kitchen block and many cells need significant attention. This has impacted upon prisoners' accommodation and the environment within which staff have to work. Water penetration is commonplace as most Living Block roofs are in a poor condition and many gutters are blocked with plant growth. There has been a significant lack of investment in the site, with capital bids for repair and improvement frequently being turned down.

The Board welcomes prisoners' involvement in improving their environment through painting cells, including their own which they have damaged. Prisoners, themselves, seem happy to be so occupied.

Some of the buildings continue to be unfit for purpose due to their age and unsuitability to meet even the basic environmental energy performance standards.

In the kitchens, the Food Safety Management Assessment gave a red rating to the fabric and structure last October, with most of the issues dating back to 2016. These are still outstanding and are unlikely to be resolved without substantial expenditure to fix the environmental health issues. IMB rota visit reports have regular comments regarding complaints from the staff that the ageing kitchen equipment is continually breaking down. It is likely this equipment will continue to be uneconomically repaired, until there is some realistic investment in this area.

There were 68 responses to the annual kitchen food survey. The kitchen management state that the prison staff need to encourage prisoners to complete this, together with the food comments books on the wings, some of which remain unopened for months.

Generally, there are problems with rodents around the kitchens and living blocks, with rat poison boxes now clearly visible, creating a potential risk to prisoners who may wish to interfere with them.

LB1-LB4 inclusive are generally poorly presented internally with outdated facilities and poor fixtures and fittings. Little thought has been given to the provision of services for disabled prisoners, or the increasing number of elderly prisoners, which also applies to many of the other living blocks. HMP Channings Wood has received at least two prisoners in their 90s this year.

LB1 continues to be dogged by problems resulting from the mix of vulnerable and mains prisoners, the majority of whom are located there because they have been involved in bullying and debt issues on a mains wing. Theft from cells, destruction of furnishings and fabric of the interior and violent intimidation are rife and create a very unpleasant atmosphere, particularly for the new prisoners who are located on this block. We are dismayed to report that double occupancy of the single cells in LB1 is still commonplace. The cells are too small and only equipped for one prisoner, which means the second man must sit, hunched on a bottom bunk or sit on the lavatory to eat his meals. This is yet another source of tension and insecurity.

Lockdowns continue to frustrate prisoners' attempts to attend the library or gym. For example, LB5 missed six out of eight weeks' library visits in early 2018.

An IMB rota visit to LB8 in June reported poor ventilation and insulation in the shower area with no water temperature control and no adequate extraction. Other rota reports highlighted poor heating and plumbing, poor furniture and floor coverings, together with remarks that repairs take anything between six months and two years to be implemented.

As the mental health of prisoners should now be of such serious concern, we would suggest the sports field could be a valuable aid to prisoners' wellbeing. Yet it is an under-used facility, with a lack of maintenance making it difficult to use effectively. The same would apply to the extensive vegetable gardens which also require proper investment. The IMB is disappointed to note that these are largely abandoned.

In relation to complaints from prisoners and discussions with them, issues are frequently raised about, for example, the quality of food and the way it is served, communication between staff and prisoners, or the tidiness of the prison. These are all dependent on the numbers of prison officers employed and the quality of those employees and their ability to dovetail with more experienced staff. Attempts are being made to improve these problems,

but it would seem there is a long way to go to create an atmosphere which facilitates the consistency of services and prisoner/staff relations, that one should reasonably expect.

Applications made to the Board during the reporting period have reduced by just under 25% to 356 (see Section D).

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

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Healthcare at HMP Channings Wood is provided by Care UK, Mental health services are provided by Devon Partnership Trust and EDPO Drug and Alcohol provides substance misuse services. Since November 2017, Care UK also has a contract for the provision of social care services.

There is nursing cover between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00 on weekdays and between 08:30 and 17:30 at the weekend. Devon Doctors provide an out-of-hours GP service.

Doctors provide eight sessions per week and the dentists are available for 3½ days per week, although for part of the reporting year dental services were totally suspended.

Staffing levels are now improved, with the number of bank staff trained and cleared to work within the prison environment increased.

Morale within the healthcare department also appears to be improving.

### **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)**

We know that these are a serious problem across the prison estate. They affect individuals in different ways affecting the heart rate, causing vomiting, and raised blood pressure, and can cause the individual to react erratically – high energy levels, low energy levels, loss of pain sensation and a tendency to violence. Suicide and self-harming are linked to NPS use. Some deaths in custody at HMP Channings Wood have been linked to NPS.

It continues to be easy to obtain illicit drugs within the prison, which leads to serious consequential effects for both prisoners and staff.

It has been reported to the IMB that fumes from the illicit smoking or ingestion of NPS affects prison officers and medical staff. They escort affected prisoners who need to go to hospital and have to remain there if the prisoner is admitted. This frequently results in the prison being short-staffed and the regime being curtailed.

Healthcare staff are also affected as they have to attend every incident.

Staff dealing with NPS incidents cannot carry out planned duties, so a backlog occurs.

Both prison and healthcare staff have needed medical care themselves as a result of inhaling fumes. Again, this time away from their duties has a deleterious effect on the efficient operation of the prison regime.

There is evidence that significant amounts of Spice are being brought into the prison by impregnated mail. As in other establishments, the Channings Wood IMB would support

photocopying mail to actively counter this problem, though we understand there may be legal complications.

### **Healthcare issues:**

The Board has received many complaints regarding pain relief being withheld. It would appear that if a prisoner is caught “palming” their medication in order to sell it on, then healthcare staff make the judgment that their pain is not as great as they say and, therefore, don’t need the medication. The “palmed” medication can have unknown effects on those individuals who ingest it, but have not been prescribed the drug.

The individual who “palmed” the medication may have been pressured to do this because of bullying or because they are in debt. Nevertheless, many still remain in pain that in turn affects their behaviour and can cause the prison regime further problems.

The Board feels that a better system of managing the taking of medication by prisoners must be devised.

The Board has found a lack of transparency in the healthcare complaints system and we were concerned that the department had a process of investigating itself. There did not appear to be any independent mechanism that prisoners could use when not satisfied with any internal investigation. We are pleased to recognise that this lack of transparency has been noted and we will be monitoring the measures to make the system clearer that have been devised.

National statistics indicate that the prison population is ageing and this is reflected in experiences at HMP Channings Wood. Some of those over 70 years of age are accommodated on one of the upper floors on LB5. Wing staff have noted that cells have more elderly occupants. In addition, they suffer from an increasing range of mobility problems, as is demonstrated by the number of wheelchairs cluttering the landings. Accommodation of elderly prisoners within the prison needs to be looked at as a matter of urgency, especially their location on an upper floor.

Cell doors are not wide enough to allow wheelchairs to enter, so they have to be left outside. This makes the landing difficult to negotiate and could prove to be a hazard should there have to be an emergency evacuation. Transfer from the chair into the cell is difficult for these individuals to manage without assistance. Many wheelchairs are in a poor state of repair and it is difficult to get them repaired. This may well be an opportunity to create an activity which could be taken on by the bicycle workshop.

Applications to see the IMB appear to be fewer than in previous year and we have interpreted this as meaning that the department as a whole is operating more effectively.

### **Mental Health**

Whilst we are pleased to report that the mental health team has been increased to more realistic numbers, experienced staff have left through the year and the embedding and training of new staff has delayed the implementation of new practises and courses of treatment. Under a dedicated Mental Health Manager, who is present in Channings Wood for one day a week, a Stepped Care Model has been introduced whereby mental health needs are assessed and given the appropriate attention. In addition, daily reflection meetings involve all

the staff in the discussion of newly assessed cases. This care programme approach includes links to relevant agencies on release.

Group work in Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT) has recently started and a maximum of five men attend a three-week course. Though there is an inevitable fall off by men starting the course, those who remain report it to be very valuable in terms of changing their mind-sets. One-to-one Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is also offered as a 12-week course and is generally well received. The system of self-referrals is working well, though there is a perception that duplicated and multiple referrals are clogging up the caseloads of the team.

The present levels of staff do not, however, allow for the inevitable disruptions and staff absences, which often result in working in extremely stressful circumstances. A lack of administrative assistance and no dedicated rooms for consultations mean that qualified and experienced mental health workers and psychologists are not able to make best use of their time. Staff have reported that they have on occasions had to conduct a one-to-one consultation whilst perched on a pool table in an association room. Quite apart from the practical difficulties arising from this sort of situation, the interaction is undervalued by the lack of a conducive setting.

The upward trend in ACCT documents being opened has continued. In the first seven months of this year there were 276 compared to 241 for the same period last year. In some cases, they are opened because an officer is unsure how to handle a prisoner who is demanding attention. ACCT reviews, dealing with urgent referrals and assessments are a heavy draw on time and disruptive to routine appointments.

There has also been a significant increase in prisoners on constant watch because they are at serious risk of suicide or self-harm. There has, moreover, been a rise in the number of serious attempts of suicide and near fatal results of illicit drug use. It is undoubtedly due to diligent and appropriate responses by staff that only one such attempt has been successful this year. We commend their actions and the systems in place to deal with such incidences.

Given the prevalence of mental health problems amongst the prison population, the mental health provision falls very short of what is needed. Many men do not perceive their mental state as being a mental health problem and deal with their anxiety by self-medicating with illegal or illicitly-procured drugs, thus exacerbating the situation.

The Men Supporting Men groups that were providing such a welcome distraction, with encouragement and opportunities for creative activities, are not currently running since the departure of the governor whose inspiration and energy got them going last year. We note that there are moves to re-establish them and will monitor this important area in the future. The current general absence of organised self-help groups and creative clubs is to be greatly regretted.

A staff welfare group was established at the end of last year. This was an opportunity for staff to meet in a group every fortnight for an hour in their lunch break to bring up issues and concerns encountered in their work. Whilst we applauded this initiative, few members of staff perceived it as being a useful means of dealing with concerns they might have. Some thought they would rather have a one to one talk with a chaplain, others were reluctant to give up their lunch break. Since the departure of the governor mentioned above, these have been discontinued, though we note that a team is being established set up something similar. To date, the officers concerned have yet to receive training and no formal structure exists whereby staff are offered routine or automatic support to help them process the very difficult and challenging situations they regularly encounter. It is our opinion that support of all staff should be mandatory or at least routinely offered as part of their working hours.

## Dental Care

Dental treatment at the prison was completely suspended on 26 July 2018 with no prisoners having been treated for two months. Various equipment had failed to work, including the autoclave and the air supply. When the dental contact was run by Dorset Healthcare, that included technical and mechanical repairs, but now that the overall healthcare contract is held by Care UK, the staff maintain that any repairs to such equipment are the responsibility of the prison. Under the old contract (up to spring 2018) the waiting list had been successfully reduced to just thirty patients and two weeks, after a concerted effort that took fourteen months. During suspension the waiting list grew dramatically to 130 and ten weeks. However, the HMIP's most recent report (outside the IMB's reporting period) judged the provision now is satisfactory.

## 9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

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HMP Channings Wood's provider for education is Weston College. They work successfully in partnership with prison managers to provide a good quality education service for prisoners. Prisoners are generally positive about their learning experiences. A view which is frequently heard when discussing education with prisoners is that those who want to succeed are given every encouragement to do so. Prisoners also say that those who do not engage in learning are encouraged to do so by staff, but do not always make effective use of the opportunities and support available. Fewer days have been lost in the past year as a result of lock down and training days, though learning continues to be disrupted on occasions as a result of these occurrences and occasional uniformed staff shortages. The provision of a designated uniformed member of staff to check attendance and chase up absentees has helped to maintain a high rate of attendance.

Appropriate courses, support and guidance are made available for prisoners who are studying at different levels. Education providers maintain useful contacts with potential employers to ensure the availability of appropriate learning and training programmes. A good example of this is the expansion of design, communication, technology and information-based courses, reflecting the growing number of jobs which require computer literacy and internet competency. Resources have been improved to provide more prisoners with access to this kind of learning. There is a good range of foundation skills courses available, which enable prisoners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Higher level courses, very often related to vocational training, are also widely available, enabling increasing numbers to gain qualifications up to NVQ Level 3 in a few areas. Prisoners occasionally say that they would like to see more higher-level courses available. Education staff appropriately support approximately 30 men who are currently engaged in Open University learning.

Good use is made of induction procedures to ensure that men are quickly allocated to education and training. Staff use a 'Do It' profile to assess men's strengths and areas of need. Prisoners discuss their learning and training needs with staff and relate these to future employment prospects.

Prisoners and staff say that education courses are well-matched to prisoners' sentence plans. Suitable arrangements are in place for identifying prisoners who have learning difficulties. These men are allocated to foundation study courses with additional tuition from specialist

teachers, where they indicate a wish to be supported. The learning areas attached to industrial and training areas (PODS) continue to be popular with prisoners because they enable men to continue working while improving basic skills. Shannon Trust workers make a significant contribution to improving men's literacy skills, in classes, the library and by working in the PODS.

Suitable arrangements are in place for vulnerable prisoners to access education courses and the library. Education managers ensure that they maintain a ratio of approximately 2:1 in the allocation of time and resources, reflecting the approximate prisoner ratio of mains to VPU. There is a small, reasonably-resourced library in one of the living blocks for VPU prisoners, LB5, who can also use the main library on Friday of each week. This level of allocation is arguably insufficient. For example, 160 VPU prisoners recently visited the library on the same day, suggesting a higher level of demand than time allocation.

The gym provides a suitable range of activities including accredited courses. This year, a Physical Health and Well-Being course at NVQ Level 3 has been introduced. Prisoners make good use of the well-equipped gym. There are designated times made available for VPU and increasingly, for older men, reflecting the changing needs of the prison population. There are regular, but limited, opportunities for prisoners to engage in competitive games with teams from outside.

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

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Again, this year, the majority of the frames for polytunnels are not being utilised. The irrigation system remains a problem and is not able to provide the quantities of water required at present - this will become an increasing problem when additional polytunnels come back online.

Funding for two additional members of staff to work in horticulture / farms and gardens has been secured and it is hoped that this will allow an increased number of outside works parties to operate.

Securing and spending money in one area helps, but also highlights, deficiencies in the whole farms and gardens business. The view of staff working in this area suggests that there is a lack of a joined-up approach to how this section works and no short, medium- or long-term strategic planning exists.

Certificates of Competency can now be achieved by prisoners working in this area and Weston College have been able to focus more on teaching hard landscaping processes.

Only a small amount of in-house grown produce is used within HMP Channings Wood, but little or none of this produce is wasted: items go to the Landworks project based in Dartington or to local foodbanks. Plant Sale days have also been introduced within the prison.

Concerns about defects remain extant despite IMB reporting problems on rota visits reports and staff reporting these problems on Planet FM. For example, replacement of IMB application post boxes on the wings which had been vandalised took four months.

A 'Virtual Campus' coordinator is operating within Channings Wood and this has been developed over the reporting period and extensively used within the education environment. Further improvements are planned for next year and it is hoped to roll out this facility to other departments within the prison. There are approximately 30 to 40 computers currently available for learners to use, with planned access improvements for VP prisoners being rolled out to provide capability to word process submissions to the Open University.

Some rates of pay remain a source of concern and do not provide the opportunity for better remuneration for prisoners to take up posts where higher vacancies exist.

Weston College funding has remained static, but within their constraints they have managed to successfully implement some additional Level 1 and Level 3 courses. Level 3 courses are now available in Sports and Catering. A teacher training course is now available within Channings Wood.

The issue regarding imbalance between VP and Mains opportunities has been addressed with standardisation of vocational activities in education. Removing imbalances has been looked at and valid reasons for remaining issues are down to VP vulnerabilities.

Over the reporting period attendance at work and educational activities has improved with fewer shutdowns resulting from improved prison officer numbers. Attendance at training sessions has also improved and benefitted from having a prison officer dedicated to facilitate attendance at courses.

Courses provided by Weston College have been reviewed and now focus on employability or prisoners completing training courses. Local employers and agencies have visited the prison on three occasions this year. 210 prisoners made use of this direct approach to employers and dialogue with companies by Weston College is becoming more regular.

The key area identified is the rapid growth area in construction and a construction skills course (Level 1) is now available.

Available Open University learning and distance learning opportunities for prisoners have been expanding over the reporting period. A part-time dedicated post to co-ordinate opportunities has been implemented.

Applications for Open University (OU) Study and distance learning, funded by the Prisoners' Education Trust, have significantly increased since the creation of the OU / distance learner post. Applications for OU study have gone from 14 in October 2017 to 23 in August 2018. Prisoners' Education Trust applications have similarly increased from 7 to 45 over this period.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

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The backlog of uncompleted OASys reports continues to be a major source of frustration amongst prisoners and OMU staff. Despite concerted efforts the number continues to hover around 120. The caseload for each officer has increased from last year's high numbers to an average of 77. A scheme whereby officers were offered a monetary incentive to put in extra hours has had little take-up because it does not allow for sufficient time to complete each document. A Senior Probation Officer has been appointed to take charge of this area which, together with an increase in the number of non-operational officers, should help to reduce this backlog. The target is that every new prisoner should have an OASys report completed within 16 weeks of his sentence.

The resettlement group, Catch 22, continue to operate in close cooperation with the OMU. Multi-disciplinary meetings and workshops have been set up involving all those concerned with resettlement issues for all prisoners in the last 12 weeks of their sentences. The workshops have proved useful in making contact with those who have not previously engaged in other areas. About 80% of all prisoners need some input and assistance is given with accommodation, bank accounts, employment and training opportunities.

The loss of the National Careers Advice Service from the prison in March has been keenly felt by those working in resettlement. Their role in matching jobs within the prison, careers and training guidance for release has not been taken on by anyone with the knowledge and experience that they brought into the prison.

The Substance Misuse Service, (SMS) has a full staff of around 16 full and part time recovery and support workers who work in close cooperation with all aspects of the prison. As many as 1/3 of the prison population is involved with SMS at any one time. Specific recovery plans are devised to meet the needs of individuals. Links with agencies in the community are well established.

SMS attend and conduct welfare checks on men under the influence of NPS which impacts on their regular client time. Men under the influence of NPS are always given the opportunity to engage with SMS, but rarely take up the offer.

The Psychology Department offers only two courses to Mains prisoners but, regrettably, is still unable to run the Horizon course for sex offenders. They assess and identify the needs of the prisoners and recommend transfers to prisons where this and other relevant courses are run. It is planned that the Horizon course will be offered from early 2019.

We applaud the proposed implementation of OMIC at HMP Channings Wood, with its increase in staff levels allowing greater interaction between officers and prisoners. We will monitor the development of relationships between the key workers and their assigned prisoners in the hope that the prisoner will benefit from more individual support.

The number of those on the Release on Temporary License scheme (ROTL) has improved, but it remains a challenge - especially in terms of security and transport. With a national shortfall of 2,000 Category D places, incentives to work towards re-categorisation are reduced.

Every agency concerned with rehabilitation issues reports that prisoners who are willing to engage respond positively. However, it is those with general feelings of alienation who both

disrupt life within the prison and are serial reoffenders. HMPPS' Co-financing Organisation Round 3 programme (CF03) was introduced at Channings Wood in 2015 to work with complex cases, including prisoners failing to engage with all other agencies. The programme focuses on employment post release and provides support finding work experience and skills training within the local community. They have very good working relations with the prison regime. For example, on a day when the prison was in lock-down due to staff shortages, CF03 staff were able to provide escort to the education block for a scheduled first aid course. Prisoners interviewed commended their contact with this agency. Their caseload is limited to about 40 men at any one time and they maintain supportive contact with prisoners after release.

## C Section – Work of Board

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<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	<b>16</b>
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	<b>13</b>
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	<b>12</b>
Total number of visits to the Establishment	<b>589</b>
Total number of segregation reviews attended	<b>126</b>

## D Section - Applications

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>	<b>Previous reporting year</b>
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	17
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	13	8
C	Equality	14	17
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	14	33
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	25	19
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	4	5
F	Food and kitchens	1	4
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	46	109
H 1	Property within this establishment	45	27
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	57	52
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	8	11
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	47	79
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	32	41
K	Transfers	41	51
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>473</b>