



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP/YOI Isis

for reporting Year
January to December 2018

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison 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

There have been some welcome improvements during 2018 since our last Annual Report. This was also recognized in the recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Report published in December. In particular, prison officer staffing has finally reached agreed staffing levels following five years of a "temporary" regime introduced in September 2013. This has resulted during the final quarter of 2018 in a significantly improved regime for prisoners with more time out of cell and greater opportunity to attend education, work and other activities. The challenge for 2019 will be to recruit and retain sufficient staff for the operation of a full regime, with further improvement in classroom and work attendance and all prisoners having a key worker. (7.1)

However, violence involving prisoners and the use of force by prison officers remain major issues for the prison. Despite monthly variations in figures for both of these areas, there were 427 incidents of violence recorded by the prison during 2018, an increase from 2017, and there was an increasing use of force used by officers over the year. It is encouraging to note that the last few months of 2018 showed a downward trend in levels of violence. (4.1, 4.5)

Funds from the "10 Prisons Project" initiated by the Prisons Minister are being used to improve security and reduce the ability for drugs to enter the prison. The funds have also been providing some welcome decency improvements for prisoners in areas such as toilet seats, windows repaired in cells, biometric terminal updates and new shower heads. Furthermore, in-cell telephones are now finally due to be installed which will be of major benefit to the well being of prisoners and to the atmosphere within the prison. The Board has been making the case for these in each of its last five Annual Reports. (7.4)

The Governor has now been in post for two and a half years. She, her Senior Management Team and prison staff are to be commended for the way that prisoners' lives have been improved. For several years, the IMB has stressed the importance of providing the Governor and local management with more devolved authority in running the prison. That has now happened and the locally run recruitment campaign resulting in 116 new officers during 2018 is a prime example of where this delegated authority can work well.

2.1 Are prisoners treated fairly?

Since October 2018, the improved regime with significantly more time out of cell has resulted in much fairer treatment for prisoners. In particular, there are now more opportunities for prisoners to attend education, work and activities, and more time for association. There are now few very long periods when they are locked in their cells. However, the current regime still limits the time that prisoners can spend on “off spur” activities to six half days per week. (7.1)

Violence remains a major issue at HMP/YOI Isis, despite significant efforts being made by the Governor and her staff, with reported assaults on staff and assaults on prisoners increasing in 2018 when compared to 2017. Some of this increase is down to increased vigilance and improved reporting, but at Isis violence remains a very significant problem, with the vast majority of violence being perpetrated by those aged 25 or under. However, there has been a small but encouraging downward trend in the last few months of 2018. (4.1)

Use of force on prisoners has also increased substantially during the year with approximately a 21% increase over the course of the year. The Board concurs with HMIP observations in this area and the need for the prison to address this as a matter of urgency. (4.5)

A continuing concern for the Board with respect to fair treatment is that many prisoners transferring into Isis have property lost and frequently never recovered because of the inefficiencies highlighted in previous reports about the Prison Service’s approach to handling property. Despite annual assurances that this is being addressed, the situation gets worse each year. This is entirely unacceptable and often the cause of increased tensions within the prison. (5.3, Section B Applications to the Board)

2.2 Are prisoners treated humanely?

In general terms, prisoners at Isis are treated humanely although the Board has seen an increased number of applications during the year about accommodation and the treatment of prisoners by officers. Some of these concerns can be attributed to the large intake of new officers where, at the end of 2018, over 80% of the prison officers on the houseblocks had less than two years’ experience. The identification of “key worker” prison officers for every prisoner should improve this situation. (7.1, Section B Applications to the Board)

Cleanliness of the houseblocks has improved during the year, although there is some way to go in ensuring consistent levels of cleanliness, and staff supervision at mealtimes is inconsistent. Concerns have been raised that more vulnerable prisoners are not getting the right amount of food or the food that they ordered. The cleanliness of serveries varies from week to week and spur to spur. Regrettably, the prison has made a conscious decision, based on their priorities, not to enforce some hygiene standards including the wearing of whites, the checking and recording of food temperatures, and ensuring soap and towels are available. (7.3)

Drugs usage remains high, although it has been reduced in the last three months of 2018 after more stringent search and security measures were put in place. Increased intelligence and a focus on staff corruption have all contributed to a welcome decrease in the supply and use of drugs. (4.2)

The Board continues to raise concern (as it did in last year’s report) about the continued detention of prisoners with enduring or chronic mental health problems, given that HMP/YOI Isis is a training prison with no in-patient facility and limited psychiatric support. Although this is a small number of prisoners, they can cause injuries to themselves and impose a huge

drain on the resources of the prison, often consuming many hours of time from staff of all grades across the establishment. Despite the caring support given to these prisoners, the Board remains concerned as to whether prison, and particularly Isis with such limited mental health facilities, is the most appropriate setting to manage such individuals. (8.5)

2.3 Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

HMP/YOI Isis is designated as a training prison for category C prisoners and young adults, but the Board remains concerned that this function is still not being discharged in a manner expected, given the significant capital investment in training and education facilities made before the prison opened in 2010.

Attendance at training and education activities has improved during the year, particularly as the regime has improved, but many classrooms are unused and workshops remain closed each day. The prison has a robust process for ensuring that purposeful activity is maximised each day but too many young men refuse to attend or are not interested in gaining qualifications to help on their release. There are also flaws in the prison's processes for attendance planning as prisoners are routinely returned to their houseblocks if an activity or lesson has been cancelled or is no longer available. (10.1)

Catch 22 works with some prisoners in the last 12 weeks of their sentence, preparing them for release. Although the majority of men released have somewhere to live, the Board is concerned that prisoners not able to return to their families or their previous home on release have to rely on Bail Accommodation (BASS) that is in very short supply. (11.2, 11.3)

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

We again ask the Minister to give serious and urgent consideration to the plight of those prisoners with mental health problems detained in prison inappropriately when they should be being treated intensively by mental health professionals in a completely different setting. In particular, we do not believe that Isis, as a designated training prison, should continue to house men with serious mental health issues. (8.5)

We also ask the Minister to require the Prison Service finally to resolve the long-standing problem of property losses when prisoners move from prison to prison. Losing their personal property has a serious impact on the fair and decent treatment of prisoners. Despite this problem being raised in previous years by this and many other prison Boards, nothing appears to have been done. (5.3, Section B Applications to the Board)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

While the number of new prison officers recruited over the past year at Isis through the local recruitment initiative is impressive, the Board remains concerned about the number of experienced officers who continue to leave the service and urges the Prison Service centrally to re-examine retention and reward policies for prison officers. There is also the need to maintain levels of recruitment if the regime is to be maintained. (7.1)

We again ask that the Prison Service resolves once and for all the appalling long-standing problem of the loss of prisoner property when prisoners transfer from one establishment to another. Despite this being raised last year, and previous years, nothing has been done centrally to address this issue, despite assurances from the Prison Service. It takes up a significant amount of staff time trying to trace property, also in chasing responses to prisoner

complaints, and costs considerable amounts in compensation and referrals to the Ombudsman. Perhaps, most importantly, a loss of personal property contributes significantly to a prisoner's mood and wellbeing. (5.3, Section B Applications to the Board)

The fabric of the prison is deteriorating after almost 10 years of use and additional costs are being incurred, as the majority of the original contractors are no longer in business. We ask the Prison Service to re-examine the level of capital funds made available so that the fabric of this new prison can be maintained rather than deteriorate as has happened across many older prisons in the estate. (7.5)

We reiterate our concern raised in previous Annual Reports about the indecent toilet facilities at HMP/YOI Isis, especially in the double cells where there is, at best, no more than a flimsy curtain a few inches between the bunk bed and toilet. Although it is encouraging to see the installation of toilet seats after 10 years, there must be a way of providing a greater degree of decency in the double cells. (7.4)

In the section to the Minister above, we reiterate our concern about prisoners with serious mental health conditions being held in a training prison. We would ask that the Prison Service review its processes, including liaison with NHS England, for the allocation and transfer of such prisoners to more suitable accommodation. (8.5)

TO THE GOVERNOR

Building on the improvements made over the last year, we would ask the Governor to:

- Maintain efforts on reducing violence across the prison, particularly amongst the younger age groups, (4.1)
- Reduce the levels of force used with an emphasis on de-escalation techniques and improve the way in which use of force is reported and monitored, (4.5)
- Further improve attendance in the Academy and the Skill Zone by encouraging more prisoners to participate and avoiding unnecessary returns to the houseblocks, (9.2, 10.1)
- Improve the reception process for new prisoners, including introducing a more structured induction programme and improving the preparation of cells for new occupants, (4.6)
- Increase the opportunities for work and training to meet the needs of the increased number of prisoners able to attend; and further develop links with local employers, (10.2)
- Improve the cleanliness and hygiene practices in the serveries and ensure that the meal services are properly managed, (7.3)
- Work with Mitie to improve the timely response to maintenance issues in areas such as the kitchen where external contractors are used ,(7.2, 7.5)
- Embed the new regime as a norm within the prison, while working towards a full regime, and developing and retaining the new prison officers, (7.1)
- Continue to improve the facilities available for families in the visits area, (5.5) and
- Ensure that the good work of the Equalities Manager in the collection and analysis of information leads to strategies that improve the outcomes for prisoners with protected characteristics. (5.2)

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

HMP/YOI Isis – named after the River Thames - opened in July 2010. It is a public sector training prison for convicted men, with a mix of young prisoners between the ages of 18 and 21 and Category C adults. In 2017 the age cap was lifted and the prison now accepts prisoners of any age.

It is situated in Thamesmead in South-East London. The certified normal accommodation (CNA) is 478. The operational capacity (OP CAP) i.e. the maximum population it can safely and decently hold is 628. Although sited within the original perimeter wall of HMP Belmarsh, HMP/YOI Isis is a completely separate prison.

The following provide services within the prison:

- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare and Oxleas Interventions provide support to those with substance misuse issues,
- Novus is the education provider,
- MTCnovo is the Community Resettlement Company working within Isis,
- Mitie provides comprehensive facilities management including catering,
- Voluntary organisations working within the prison include the Shannon Trust, Switchback, Belong and Samaritans.

Prisoners are accommodated in two Houseblocks, Thames and Meridian, each comprising a central hub and four spurs. Each spur can accommodate over 70 prisoners on three levels. Each spur has a servery and outside an exercise yard with fitness equipment. Each Houseblock has a laundry, operated by laundry orderlies.

In a block opposite the Houseblocks is the Academy, with 19 classrooms and a capacity in excess of 200, the Skill Zone with six workshops, the library, healthcare and the multi-faith suite. Separately there is a well equipped gym able to take 40 prisoners, a cardiovascular studio, an indoor sports hall and two outdoor Astroturf pitches.

Evidence sections 4 – 11

4. SAFETY

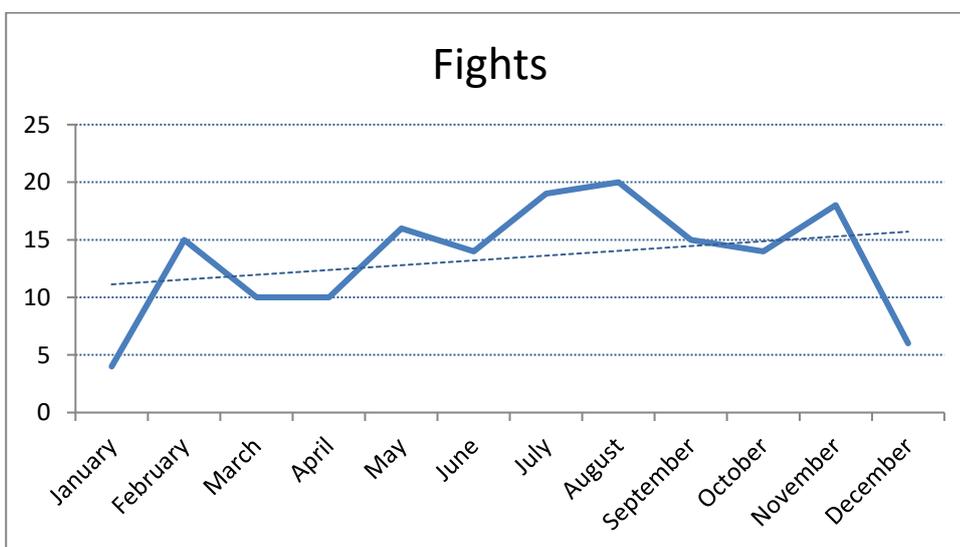
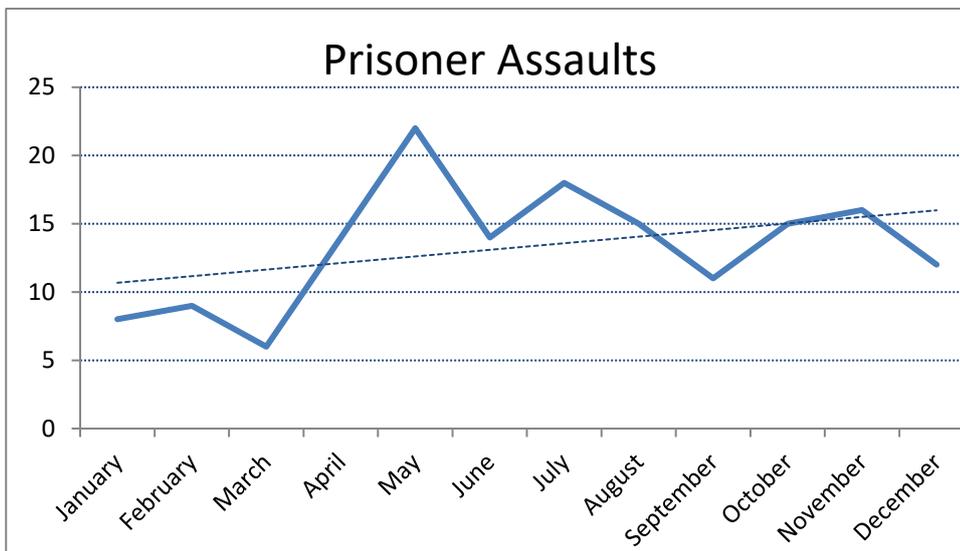
4.1 Assaults and violence

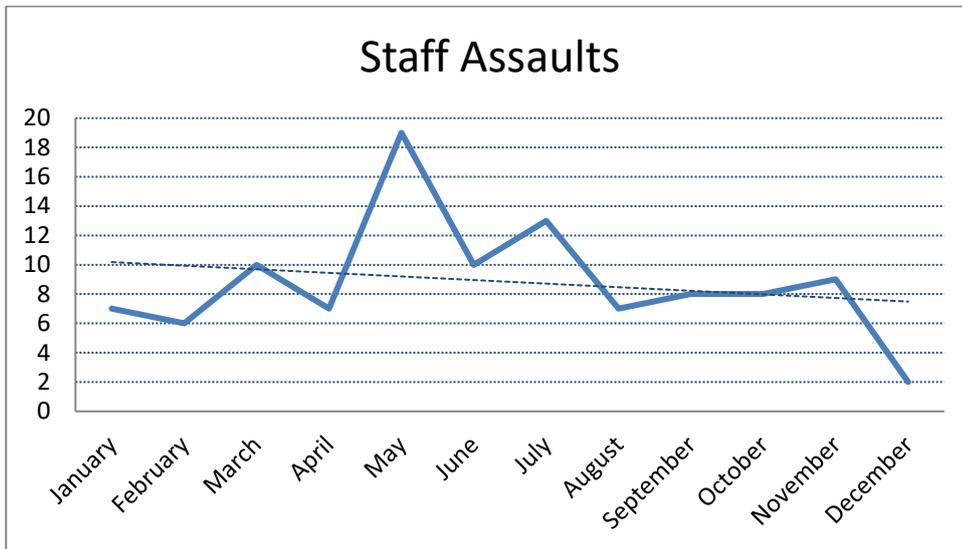
Violence remains a major issue at HMP/YOI Isis, despite significant efforts being made by the Governor and her staff, with the following figures provided in Safer Custody reports:

- 160 assaults on prisoners,
- 161 fights amongst prisoners, and
- 106 assaults on staff.

These all show an increase since 2017, and whilst it is difficult to determine the exact percentage increase because of changes in reporting, they paint a picture of continuing and unacceptably high levels of violence at Isis.

The following tables show the monthly data in 2018, together with a trend line for the year:





From our analysis of the data over the complete year, it can be seen that:

- the trend in prisoner on prisoner assaults has been slowly rising during the year,
- fights amongst prisoners have also been slowly rising during the year, and
- despite a spike mid-year, assaults on staff have been decreasing.

If these three aspects of violence are taken together, it is encouraging that there is a small decline from the summer of 2018 and it is to be hoped that this continues into 2019 with improved security arrangements being put in place.

Young men of 25 or under perpetrate the vast majority of the violence. Despite only 54% of the Isis prison population being less than 25 years of age, over 95% of the violence is initiated by these young men. Much of this relates to gang, debt or drug issues, and also petty disputes related to cell sharing, pushing in at queues and long-term grudges, although there are a number of instances of violence occurring when instructions from staff are not followed. The staff assaults frequently occur when they are attempting to intervene to stop a fight or to protect a prisoner.

The small Safer Custody team identifies safety and safeguarding issues, and there is a monthly meeting examining safer custody issues. The work of the team covers reception, induction and ongoing support for prisoners with safety issues. It should be noted that the identification of violent incidents is now far more comprehensive as the Safer Custody team examine records from a number of sources across the prison to produce comprehensive “timeline” data, rather than simply relying on the Prison Service Incident Reporting System.

We agree with the recently released HMIP report where the level of violence was described as “too high” and the Board will continue to monitor violence during 2019 with an expectation that the violence will decrease, in accordance with the “10 Prisons Project” aims.

4.2 Drugs and illegal items

The “timeline” data referenced above shows 553 recorded incidents of drug use during the first nine months of the year (an average of over 60 per month). Most of these relate to the use of “spice” although cannabis is also used across the prison and its use has become more prevalent towards the end of the year. During the year, 561 drug tests (both random and on suspicion) were undertaken of which 181 were positive.

It is encouraging to note that the timeline data for the final three months of the year showed a significant decline in the instances of drug use to a total of 71 (an average of 24 per month). This follows the provision of extra funds under the “10 Prisons Project”. They have been used

in areas such as full entry searching of all staff, photocopying of all prisoner incoming post (referenced in our Report last year), drug detection scanners for post, and additional drugs dogs. There have also been significant increases in officer numbers.

Intelligence with respect to drugs and other illicit items has been used during the year with very positive results. Over 540 items of contraband have been identified and seized, and an agency support worker received a significant custodial sentence in November for bringing illicit items into the prison.

4.3 Listeners

The Listener scheme was re-launched at the end of 2017 but incurred a number of problems during the first 8 months of 2018, including security clearance, mistrust by some prisoners and staff, and experienced Listeners being transferred or released. This resulted in less than 10 (formal and informal) call-outs per month.

During the final four months, the situation improved with five qualified and security-cleared Listeners available across both houseblocks, with between 20 and 30 call-outs each month.

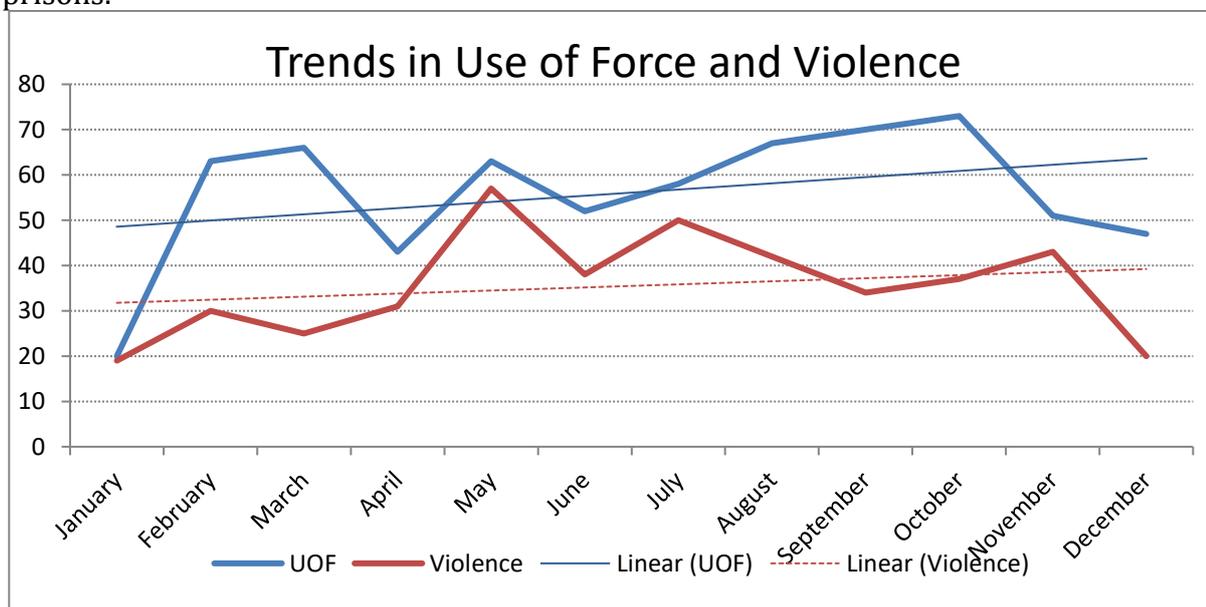
4.4 Self harm and suicide prevention

The number of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2018 increased to an average of 18 per month, (or a total of 214 for the year) from the average of 15 per month in 2017. The management of the ACCT process was robust, with regular checks being made by the Duty Governor and the Safer Custody team. Suicide and self harm (SASH) training has been rolled out across the prison to all prison and non-directly employed staff.

There were no deaths in custody during 2018.

4.5 Use of force

Use of force increased by 21% over the course of the year, slightly less than the 28% increase in assaults and fights, as shown in the graph below. This year's HMIP report stated that "force was too often used to deal with non-compliance and there was insufficient use of de-escalation techniques". They also report that use of force is higher than at other similar prisons.



There is also concern that use of force paperwork is frequently not completed, with a significant backlog of required documentation, and that body-worn video camera (BWVC) coverage of incidents was often not available. BWVC use has improved over the course of the year, but by the year end BWVC recordings of incidents were only up to 60%, and the majority of recordings did not cover the run-up to the incident.

The prison is treating the increase in use of force seriously. The monthly use of force meetings, which are chaired by a governor, have been increased to weekly. They review a comprehensive report on all incidents that have occurred as well as CCTV and BWVC footage. Various initiatives have been put in place to try to understand and reduce the use of force, and although there was a drop in the last three months of the year it is too early to see whether this has had a sustained effect.

4.6 Reception and Induction

Prisoners arrive at Reception from other prisons and not directly from the courts. The prison now receives prisoners four times a week, replacing the twice-weekly intakes operated before new staffing profiles were introduced in the last quarter of 2018. It was noted at a recent inspection by HMIP that the prison escort vans were reasonably clean and that the prisoners are well treated by escort staff.

On arrival at Reception, the formal processes are dealt with efficiently in areas which are well decorated and clean; however the holding suites have no information notice boards for the new arrivals and this matter should be addressed. The initial healthcare assessment and safer custody issues are carried out effectively and peer mentor support is available. The Board is pleased to note an improvement with prisoners being transferred from Reception to the Induction spur without unnecessary delay.

All prisoners should arrive with their property, however in a small but significant number of cases this is not happening. This is an ongoing problem and better measures need to be put in place in order that the prisoners receive their property without delay or loss. The prison received 273 complaints from prisoners in 2018 concerning property lost in transfer and frequently these are never recovered. (72 of these complaints to other prisons remain outstanding at the end of 2018). During the year, approximately £6,000 was paid out by the Prison Service for property lost by Isis prisoners.

Searching of prisoners arriving at Isis from other prisons is robust and it is of concern to the Board that contraband items such as mobile phones and SIM cards, drugs and tobacco are routinely found every week when prisoners should have been searched and checked as they left their sending prison. As well as large numbers of mobile phones, the prison also found a prison issue laptop and an in-cell telephone amongst prisoners' property after they arrived.

First night arrangements for new prisoners are on an induction spur with support from prisoner mentors who are responsible for issuing essential items and bedding. The arrival of new prisoners needs to be overseen more rigorously by staff, to ensure they understand the prison facilities and regime. Showers and telephone calls are given to the majority of arrivals unless arriving late in the day. A shortage of televisions and kettles was a cause for concern in 2017 and earlier in 2018, however this has now improved.

The initial inductions commence the morning after arrival. Healthcare secondary screening takes place in the healthcare suite four times a week. The induction process has become somewhat disjointed since the introduction of arrivals four days a week. The relaxed environment of the multi-faith suite is used to conduct induction sessions for Chaplaincy, Oxleas Interventions and OMU two days a week but on other days these sessions happen

randomly on the spurs, which is unsatisfactory. There needs to be consistency for all new arrivals. A new manager has been appointed to oversee Inductions and is working to improve the situation.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Religious Provision

The multi-faith suite provides facilities for all faiths in a tranquil environment. 213 prisoners are Muslims, 116 Roman Catholic and 166 prisoners are Church of England or of other Christian faiths. In 2018 there has been an increase in Rastafarian prisoners from 2 to 16 leading to the appointment of a sessional Rastafarian chaplain

Chaplains work with prisoners with complex needs. They have also worked with probation, community chaplains and outside agencies linked to resettlement. Pastoral care is given to prisoners who have experienced bereavements of relatives and friends. Sycamore Tree courses (victim awareness) and two Tarbiyyah courses, provided by the Chaplaincy are well attended.

The new regime introduced weekend association and this has resulted in a reduction in the number of prisoners attending C of E services from an average of 60 to 30. Between 125 -135 prisoners attended Jum'uah each week. 160 Muslim prisoners fasted during Ramadhan and celebrated Eid.

5.2 Equalities

The ethnicity breakdown of prisoners has remained steady with a prisoner population that is 75% BAME and 25% White. The age breakdown also remains steady showing around 55% prisoners are less than 25 years of age. In December there were 58 foreign nationals.

Following the appointment of the Equalities Manager, the promotion of equalities and diversity has improved. Equality representatives have been appointed in each houseblock, the use of translation services has increased, a group for Travellers has been set up and there have been two procedural justice reviews, one of complaints and one of applications. The collection and analysis of data has also improved.

Early indications are that the allocation of "attractive posts" appears to be lower than might be expected for younger prisoners and prisoners from BAME groups. In response, the prison is introducing changes to the allocation process. There are also indications that the application of the IEP scheme has an adverse impact on those who are Muslim and younger prisoners and may need to be revised. More time is needed to identify trends and implement changes in response, so the outcomes for prisoners will not be evident until 2019 and beyond.

Members of the Senior Management Team have been allocated a particular protected characteristic and are expected to lead on issues relating to that characteristic. Although these allocations have been in place for some time there is little evidence of leadership in respect of these groups.

An equalities meeting chaired by the Governor or her Deputy and attended by key staff has been in place for some months. This meeting reviews relevant data relating to areas such as adjudications, segregation, use of force and allocation of jobs to determine if issues exist requiring review. Although Discrimination Incident Review Forms (DIRFs) are routinely available on all spurs, the number of completed DIRFs remains low at a total of 26 for the year.

5.3 Complaints

The prison has a robust process in place for dealing with prisoner complaints. The Business Hub Manager follows up overdue complaints daily, and the Board reviews monthly statistics, including overdue complaint responses.

During the year, the prison handled 2380 complaints. The largest areas of complaints were:

- Request for property from “sending” prison,
- Request for property within Isis,
- Canteen, and
- Meals – primarily around problems at the servery.

Of continuing concern to the Board is the number of “external” complaints to other prisons (primarily about lost property) that remain unanswered. There were 273 such complaints during 2018 of which 72 remained unanswered at year-end. These 72 complaints only relate to the last six months of the year, as earlier complaints, that remain unanswered, are simply deleted by the prison and never followed up.

5.4 IEP Process

A revised IEP policy was launched in 2018, which emphasised the need to ensure that prisoners were aware of the effect of continued poor behaviour and gave supervising officers a moderating role. From members’ rota reports, it appears that some new staff are not completing the paperwork relating to an issue of a negative IEP. Also as mentioned above there are indications that Muslim and younger prisoners are adversely affected by the scheme.

5.5 Visits and Family Engagement

Visits are held in a well-equipped and spacious Visits Hall on five days of the week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday). The prisoners use biometric terminals on each spur to book visits. During the year, the Board has commented on the limited use of the children’s play area and the lack of refreshment facilities available on a Thursday and Sunday because of contract issues with the supplier, PACT. We are pleased to note that both of these issues are set to be resolved early in the 2019, in addition to which a crèche will be added using funds recently obtained.

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 The Segregation Unit

The Unit has 16 cells, plus two for special accommodation and an average of 44 prisoners were segregated each month in 2018 (the monthly average was 35 in 2017). This is a significant increase of 25% and we are concerned by the increase of segregated prisoners. 525 prisoners were segregated during 2018, of whom 165 were young offenders (2017 – 425 and 109 young offenders, a 51% increase in young offenders being segregated). This is consistent with the proportion of young offenders in the prison population, as is the segregation of black and minority ethnic prisoners.

The increase in segregated prisoners is a consequence of an increase in violence, but also the number of drug related incidents, such as prisoners found under the influence or in possession of drugs, as well as prisoners arriving from other prisons with drugs or phones.

Another trend not seen at HMP/YOI Isis previously is long term residents on the unit who are staying longer and past the initial 42 days. One prisoner will reach the six-month limit in early 2019 and continues to be difficult to manage on a day-to-day basis. Threats are made to staff daily, which makes it impossible for this particular prisoner to be relocated into normal accommodation. However, long term residency on the segregation unit is not a solution either and potentially makes it harder to resolve.

The unit has seen much higher numbers of the same prisoner returning to the segregation unit. Whilst the staff on the unit work hard to get these prisoners back to the spurs and a normal regime, it is only a matter of time before the prisoner returns.

The number of prisoners held in the unit already on an ACCT is also running higher than we would like to see or expect. Across 2018, the monthly average is four, but in some months up to six prisoners on an open ACCT have been held in the unit.

During the year, the Board has satisfied itself that all prisoners have been lawfully segregated, and that, where the 42 day rule has come into effect, the appropriate actions are taken to authorise the continuing segregation by the Prison Group Director or her manager. Where the segregated prisoner has been on an ACCT document, the Board has continued to check that the segregation is authorised by the Duty Governor and that appropriate actions are being undertaken. However, the Board believes that the increase in the number of prisoners with ACCTs in the unit is a cause for concern and indicative of the problem of holding prisoners with serious mental and psychological problems in the prison.

The Board visits at least weekly and speaks to each prisoner who has been segregated. A Board member attends the weekly scheduled GOOD reviews when continuation of segregation under Rule 45 or 49 is considered. Such reviews are always chaired by a governor and include healthcare and other members of the prison including, on occasion, psychology and OMU.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

7.1 Staffing levels on the houseblocks

In our last Annual Report, we raised serious concerns about the amount of time prisoners spent in their cells, including lengthy times on weekends. We are pleased to report that staffing levels on the houseblocks has been significantly improved during the year. In 2018, a total of 116 new prison officers were recruited (although approximately 30 left the service) The number of prison officers available on a daily basis increased from 89 to 114, although the expected complement under the new Offender Manager in Custody (OMIC) model is 127 prison officers. The prison has been able to improve the regime so that:

- prisoners from six of the eight spurs are able to attend education, work or other activities on Monday to Thursday,
- by the end of 2018, most prisoners had a key worker under the recently introduced Offender Management in Custody programme,
- all prisoners now have association at weekends, and
- there is evening association on various spurs on four evenings a week, although an individual prisoner will have evening association twice each week or four times a week if they are enhanced prisoners.

This is a significant improvement. The IMB looks forward to all prisoners being able to attend work and other activities for the whole of the week, for there to be evening association every evening and the key worker initiative being fully embedded.

7.2 Kitchen, food and catering

At a full inspection by HMIP in July 2018, 67% of prisoners said the prison food at Isis was good, which the Inspectorate stated was impressive. We agree with this observation and there are very few applications to the IMB about the quality of the food. (Four in 2018, primarily relating to the serveries, not food preparation).

A well-qualified team runs the kitchen and the prisoners are required to attend a basic food hygiene course before being allowed to work in the kitchen. The prisoners are encouraged to work independently and work in a calm and pleasant atmosphere.

A system of pre-select menus of hot and cold food repeated every four weeks operates in the prison and the menu provides for religious, cultural and medical needs. The allocation of £2.02 per day per prisoner is still within budget but this is becoming more difficult to maintain as food prices continue to rise.

Maintenance and repair of equipment has been an ongoing problem, including damaged tiles round the kitchen and around drainage covers; the IMB first commented on this in a January rota report and the issue has still not been resolved. The slow servicing and repair of some electrical equipment causes inconvenience and frustration to the staff especially when catering for festivals such as Ramadan.

7.3 Serveries

Some spur serveries and food trolleys are not always clean and leftover food is sometimes left in trays in the serveries overnight. Some serveries and trolleys are cleaned to a high standard but there is no consistency and no systematic approach to ensure that all spurs meet basic food safety standards all of the time. The prison appears to have taken a conscious decision not to enforce hygiene standards; servery workers do not routinely wear protective clothing, soap and towels are not generally available and the temperature of food is not checked and recorded. IMB members have raised these issues in numerous rota reports during the year and in previous years.

Officers need to take a more proactive approach to managing the serving of meals, not only to ensure that standards of hygiene in these areas are upheld, but also to ensure prisoners receive the food that they have ordered, that there is proper portion control and that more vulnerable prisoners do not find themselves without food or without the food that they ordered.

7.4 Prison Cells

There are 150 double cells. Each year, the IMB has raised the needs of prisoners using the lavatory, as only a flimsy curtain separates the lavatory from the rest of the cell. This is not sufficient to provide privacy for the user or the other occupant who may be trying to eat his meal, wash or clean his teeth. It is encouraging that the toilets are finally being fitted with toilet seats as part of the "10 Prisons Project", almost 10 years after the prison was opened. But there continue to be issues with badly stained pans, and though the prison continues to try and resolve this issue, the source of the problem is the material used to manufacture the pans.

Prisoners are moved into cells that may have been wrecked by a previous occupant without the broken furniture being replaced. Some cells do not have cupboard or storage space.

There needs to be officer commitment to ensuring that cells are properly equipped and furnished, particularly when a prisoner arrives in Isis from another prison but also when a prisoner moves spurs.

It is anticipated that the prison will be one of the first prisons to benefit from the project to install in-cell telephony in 2019. This is something that has been anticipated since 2013 and included in our report each year since then. It is the IMB's view that in-cell telephony has major benefits including reducing violence, bullying and self harm; and in supporting family engagement.

7.5 Prison Fabric

The prison opened almost 10 years ago. It is of concern to the IMB that only two of the sub-contractors involved in the prison construction are still in business. We have been told that in letting contracts, no "bond" or insurance was taken out to ensure that in the event of sub-contractors going out of business and problems occurring in the fabric of the building, the prison would have some protection or comeback. This has not been the case and the prison carries the financial burden of repairs that relate to the quality of the build, including flooring that is bubbling and lifting and cell windows that are faulty.

During 2018, the IMB has raised concerns about the time that repairs and maintenance take, especially in areas such as the kitchens, where Mitie has to rely on specialist contractors. The evidence for this is that it has taken over nine months to repair tiles, a commercial pot washer has been waiting for repair for eight months and, in the run up to Ramadan, ovens and freezers were waiting for long periods for repair.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 Healthcare Provision

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust is the provider of healthcare services at HMP/YOI Isis. Oxleas Interventions provide a clinical substance misuse service that helps prisoners with drug and addiction problems.

8.2 Staffing and clinics

Healthcare service is led by the Operational Manager. There are two teams. The primary care team provides a 24 hour service and has an establishment of 17.6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff of which 12.6 FTE are qualified nurses. The mental health team has 4 FTE posts working in secondary care, managing those with serious and enduring conditions. Eight staff, including a part time psychologist and a senior nurse practitioner, work in the primary mental health team. There are 15 posts in Oxleas Interventions working with prisoners who have drug or addiction issues, and there are 1.5 FTE nurses working with prisoners on substance misuse issues. At the end of the year, there were a significant number of vacancies including 7 FTE vacancies in the primary health care team, 1.6 FTE vacancies in the mental health teams and 3 FTE vacant posts in Oxleas Intervention or the substance misuse team.

22 specialist clinics are held each week; including GP (4 session pw), dentist (4 session pw) and psychiatrist (5 sessions pw); and 3 clinics are held monthly – ultrasound, podiatry (2 session pm) and optician (4/5 sessions pm).

8.3 Dispensing Medicines.

Isis now has its own pharmacy, which is open from 9am – 5pm during weekdays. In addition, there is an emergency cupboard for any necessary medications. Increased staffing levels have enabled the prison to improve the management of the queues for the dispensing of medication. This has been a concern of the IMB as we have frequently noted lack of supervision in this area.

8.4 Complaints

Healthcare has a separate system of handling complaints from prisoners. There were 186 complaints made through this system in 2018. All complaints should be responded to within 10 days. The IMB believes that there continues to be some confusion, among prisoners, about where to find healthcare complaint forms. These should be readily available on both houseblocks for prisoners to be able to easily make confidential applications without needing to ask healthcare or block staff for a form.

8.5 Mental Health Services

As well as the staff working in the primary and secondary mental health teams listed above, there are psychiatrists, counsellors and CBT sessions each week. But the IMB continues to express concern that a small number of prisoners with significant mental health problems make a disproportionate demand on the prison's resources in terms of cost and staff time. Isis has no provisions for prisoners with serious and enduring mental health problems and the Board feels strongly that those individuals should be treated in an alternative healthcare environment.

The Segregation Unit is the only place in the prison where such prisoners can be effectively managed. As an example, two prisoners with "non-severe" mental health conditions had been held in segregation for a total of 120 and 59 days respectively (the second one having an ACCT opened initially in July 2018). While the unit is calmer than the houseblocks and these prisoners received good care from the staff, they made hugely disproportionate demands on staff time and resources, and the Segregation Unit is not a suitable environment for them.

8.6 Drug Strategy

Having started the year severely under-staffed, Oxleas Interventions now have 15 members of staff; 252 prisoners were on their caseload at the end of the year.

During the first nine months of the year, drug usage amongst prisoners was significant and at higher levels than in 2017. However, new security measures introduced using funds from the "10 Prisons Project" have dramatically reduced the usage of drugs, primarily spice and cannabis, amongst the prison population. Results of both random and suspicion testing for drugs have shown a decline since the summer, with 35 positive results in the fourth quarter compared to 78 positive results in the previous quarter.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 Education provision

Novus provides a range of classroom-based programmes including maths and English functional skills from entry to level two, business management, broadcasting and art. Skills programmes provided in workshops include barbering, painting and decorating, up-cycling and the taught element of some work based qualifications including scaffolding, aerial

window cleaning and industrial cleaning. In addition, the prison manages programmes in recycling and waste management, horticulture and grounds maintenance.

IMB members have not been in a position to assess the quality of teaching but Ofsted, as part of the HMIP inspection, identified that too many lessons lacked pace and did not motivate prisoners to progress.

9.2 Attendance at education

As HMP/YOI Isis is a designated training prison, charged with preparing men for release at the end of their sentences, the Board would expect that all prisoners who can benefit have the opportunity to participate fully in educational and training activities. Both the Academy and the Skill Zone are well-equipped modern facilities, but these valuable resources are under-utilised with around half the classrooms regularly empty and often only three out of six workshops in use when IMB members have visited as part of our rota visits in 2018. The provision is limited by the resources available within the contract with Novus, and the competing demands of other prison resources.

The prison has worked to extend the programmes available and during 2018 aerial window cleaning, scaffolding and up-cycling have been introduced, but bicycle repair and carpentry have ceased. The numbers listed to attend the Academy have increased, but there has not been a substantial change in the proportion of those listed who attend. Taking a sample of days in the last three months of 2018, the average attendance in the Academy was 69% of those listed, with 55% being the lowest attendance and 83% the highest. The number attending the Skill Zone has also increased in 2018 and, though the numbers listed are lower than those for the Academy at an average of 53 prisoners, the percentage of those listed attending is higher at an average of 79%.

The main reason for prisoners not attending their course or workshop is their refusal, and though the prison has tried to understand and respond to refusals, the problem has proved intractable. The second highest reason for non-attendance is that the prisoner is not required and therefore has to return to his spur. This happens mainly because a lesson or activity has been cancelled or prisoners have completed the course. The IMB feels that there should be strategies in place to avoid prisoners being returned to the houseblocks.

9.3 Allocation to courses and activities

The prison tries to sequence prisoners' attendance at a range of activities and appointments that are important to their individual development, as well as their attending the education, training and work that will prepare them for their release. This approach requires the active involvement of a number of departments and agencies and still needs to be fully embedded.

The induction period for prisoners that enables comprehensive needs assessments and time for prisoners to take a number of "taster" sessions before choosing a vocational pathway has been reduced from six to four weeks. This approach does enable the prisoner to take a number of programmes, all of which contribute to a portfolio relevant to a specific industry and of value to employers, but HMIP felt that that some of the programmes were uninspiring and lacked challenge. Also some of the programmes do not provide a nationally recognised qualification.

9.4 Library

Library visits have increased since the beginning of the year when there were 691 visits in January. Visits increased to over 1000 in May, June and July, but have fallen back to 884 in

October and 912 in December. There is a good stock of books and the number of books and DVDs being borrowed has been in the 600s for most of the year. Prisoners attending the Academy or Skill Zone attend the library, but more attention needs to be given to enabling prisoners from the spurs to attend and benefit from the library facilities.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 Prisoner Involvement

The average population of the prison during 2018 has been 620. The number of places for activities, including education, vocational training, work and personal development activities for which prisoners are listed, has during a sample of days in the last three months of the year ranged from 510 and 595. These activities are split between mornings and afternoons so that each morning or afternoon between 245 and 300 prisoners will be listed to attend an activity. As part of the regime introduced in September 2018, prisoners on six of the eight spurs are able to attend work, education, group work and other off spur activities. This means that a prisoner should be able to attend these off-spur activities on six half days including Friday morning. A morning session lasts three hours and an afternoon session 2.75 hours and it is very important that prisoners arrive on time and that the session starts punctually if prisoners are to get maximum benefit.

Attendance on activities is typically between 74% and 87% of those listed. As identified in section 9, the main reasons for non-attendance are prisoner refusal and that the prisoner is not required. Typically between 40 and 50% of non-attendances will be because of prisoner refusal.

10.2 Work Opportunities

There are a range of work opportunities available to prisoners, including wing cleaners, orderlies for visits and reception, serveries, library, education and gym, and a range of representative and mentor roles. Daily there are around 130 work or mentor roles, not all full time. Kitchen workers are needed every day of the week, including weekends, reception orderlies are only needed on three half days per week. The number of prisoners at work on a Friday afternoon falls to around 30 because work, education and other activities are not run and prisoners spend their time on the spurs, with visits to the gym, inductions for new prisoners and canteen. Across the week, Monday to Friday there were, on the weeks examined, around 1250 orderly or mentor posts listed for a half day, but typically there were only around 850 prisoner attendances.

The number and type of work opportunities needs to increase if all prisoners are going to have the opportunity to work and/or train and this should include increasing the number of jobs linked to employers. During the year the prison has increased its focus on establishing links with local employers, but it will take time for opportunities to come on stream. The prison needs to ensure that relations with employers are sustainable and that real opportunities for work exist. There have in previous years been a number of false starts including, kitchen interiors, LED lighting and mattress recycling.

During the year prisoners have raised concerns about the pay rates for various jobs. These include views that:

- The rates are lower than in other prisons,
- The rates did not recognize the amount of effort or skill a job required, and
- How well a job is performed is not recognized.

The prison has been reviewing pay rates and it is anticipated that changes will be introduced in 2019.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 Resettlement planning

For most of 2018, the Offender Management Unit (OMU) has struggled with vacant posts as it did throughout 2017. The position improved a little during the year, but by December the unit again had a number of vacant administrative and offender manager posts and further moves imminent. Improved staffing across the prison has meant that cross-deployment of OMU officers was not an issue; unfortunately this has not resulted in a reduction in the backlog of Offender Assessment System (OASys) reports that underpin sentence planning; this continues to be hampered by the high level (80%) of new prisoners arriving without a completed OASys. The OMU has been effective in releasing prisoners on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) although lack of BASS (Bail Accommodation) places remains an issue. Release on temporary licence (ROTL) was also possible for a few prisoners in 2018 – there had been none in 2017.

Following the introduction of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model, most prisoners now have a dedicated key worker. It is too early to assess the impact this will have on managing prisoners' sentences but the early indications from both prisoners and officers is promising. Another new initiative is the replacement at the end of the year with a shorter "risk review" for low and medium risk prisoners, rather than requiring a full OASys report, and it is hoped this will free up some of the "backlog" which slows down the release process.

11.2 Release support

The Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) subcontracts to Catch 22 for the delivery of resettlement services in the prison. Resettlement workers see an average of 52 prisoners each month. Prisoners are offered help to open bank accounts, find accommodation, and resolve problems with outstanding fines and debts. Not all prisoners need or accept this help and on average 10 prisoners each month are helped to open a bank account and 8 are helped with resolving issues around fines.

At the beginning of the year, the National Careers Service (NCS) worked with prisoners in respect of education and employment when they were released. This arrangement ended at the end of March. During the year the number of prisoners going into education has reduced from 20+ in March to 5 in December. The number of prisoners entering employment has also reduced from the high 20s and low 30s to 14 in October and 13 in December.

Catch 22 provides a resettlement programme called Getting It Right (GIR). GIR is focused on CRC clients who are typically low or medium risk. Higher risk National Probation Service (NPS) clients can undertake GIR, through negotiation, although this was not yet in place at the end of 2018. Though the number of prisoners eligible to join the programme will typically be in the late teens or twenties, only 6–8 prisoners participate each month.

11.3 Accommodation

Of the 528 prisoners in contact with the CRC, in a 10 month period 183 needed help with housing. The IMB in November spoke to 20 prisoners who were due to be released before the end of the year. Six prisoners were returning to live with family, seven others had

accommodation arranged. Of the remaining seven prisoners, five had no accommodation but were working with Catch 22/DePaul. One of the difficulties appears to be the extreme shortage of BASS accommodation. A prisoner eligible to be released on HDC needs an address or they will not be released. Prisoners who have completed their sentence can get very close to their release date before a location is identified and sometimes on their release no accommodation has been identified. It is important that prisoners have accommodation on release, as without a base, it will be nigh on impossible for them to find work or set their life on a new course.

11.4 Employment

Of the 20 prisoners that the IMB spoke to in November, all except one prisoner said that they had worked and/or taken courses and gained qualifications. Ten prisoners had no employment to go to, but Catch 22 was helping four and four others had plans for specific jobs; how realistic these plans were is uncertain. Of the 528 prisoners, referred to above, the prison had been involved in providing advice and helping secure employment for 251 prisoners. What is not clear is the nature of the employment; whether it is full or part time, temporary or permanent.

During the year, Switchback, the "through the gate" charity, took on 44 trainees from Isis. Twenty-eight of them engaged with the programme on release and 13 of these have moved into permanent employment in various areas including catering, construction, stewarding and car recovery

A Section – Work of the IMB

The Board has a dedicated team of members, and each week one member conducts a Rota visit and one member takes Applications from prisoners. Each member also has an Area of Special Interest, which involves attending prison meetings of interest to their area. In addition to national training courses, each monthly Board meeting is preceded by a training session where a member of the prison staff will speak about a specific area of the prison. The Governor or her Deputy attends each Board meeting.

During the year, the Annual Team Performance Review was undertaken where members contributed to a review of the Board's performance and areas for action identified.

Three new members joined the Board in early 2018 and a further recruitment campaign was held in November, with three candidates recommended for appointment. Three members left the Board during the year, two because of work commitments and another because of serious illness.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period * including one member on sabbatical because of illness	11*
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period * including one member on sabbatical because of illness	11*
Total number of visits to the Establishment	330
Total number of segregation reviews attended	41

B Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation inc. laundry, clothing, ablutions	45	5
B	Discipline inc. adjudications, IEP, sanctions	43	36
C	Equality	8	2
D	Purposeful Activity inc. education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	11	40
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	30	23
E 2	Finance inc. pay, private monies, spends	14	19
F	Food and kitchens	4	2
G	Health inc physical, mental, social care	41	33
H 1	Property within this establishment	40	41
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	89	65
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	15	7
I	Sentence management inc HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	71	117
J	Staff/prisoner concerns inc bullying	71	57
K	Transfers	16	13
	Others	1	11
	Total number of IMB Applications	499	471

Applications to the Board are similar over the entire year to the numbers for 2017, although it is encouraging that the average monthly number of Applications for the final two months of the year was down to 36 compared to an average of 43 per month in the first ten months. The numbers for 2018 are somewhat skewed by two long term Segregation Unit prisoners who submitted a total of 80 Applications to the IMB between them.

The main area of concern from the above numbers is the continuing and worsening situation relating to the transfer of prisoner property from their prison when they are transferred to HMP/YOI Isis. Frequently, items of personal value are lost as well as clothing, and requests made by the Complaints Clerk at HMP/YOI Isis often fall on deaf ears at the sending prison. The response to this situation in previous reports has been poor and no changes appear imminent. The prison has paid out approximately £6,000 compensation to prisoners for lost property.