



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

at

**HMP & YOI Wormwood Scrubs**

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

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### 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged with:

- (1) satisfying 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) informing promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) **reporting annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.**

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- 2.1 Once again, Wormwood Scrubs has had a mixed year. In some areas, there has been real progress towards a more stable environment and a positive regime. At the same time, other areas have been held back by a lack of resources.
- 2.2 At the start of the reporting year, staff turnover was high and a bonus payment scheme had ended. Although the new Regime Management Plan was delivering a predictable regime, it was frequently running at amber or red. Many of the prison's daily routines could only function by taking staff away from other tasks such as OMU (Offender Management Unit), drug testing and Safer Custody.
- 2.3 In July, the core day was shortened in an effort to create more time for staff to carry out other tasks. However, the number of new officers was outweighed by those leaving and a number of senior management posts were filled by staff "acting up" (and leaving their own posts vacant in turn).
- 2.4 A new profile and daily regime for the prison were agreed with the POA union and took effect on 16 July.
- 2.5 HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) carried out an announced follow-up inspection in August. The results were not encouraging; only purposeful activity had improved since the previous inspection and was still rated "not sufficiently good". As a result of the inspection, Wormwood Scrubs was put through an internal trial of the Urgent Notification process.
- 2.6 Although the prison did not see any serious disorder during the summer, incidents took place at other prisons and Wormwood Scrubs supplied Tornado teams, which had the effect of reducing staff numbers further.
- 2.7 Smoking was banned in the prison on 7 January (for staff) and then on 5 March (for prisoners). It is now prohibited to possess any tobacco or related items within the prison grounds. This was a very significant change to prison life and its introduction was carefully planned. Although the smoking ban may have contributed to tensions among prisoners, it did not appear to directly cause any significant disturbance as had been feared.
- 2.8 The prison was made a priority site for recruitment in January and the staffing situation began to improve. By the end of February, there were 190 officers and by May, the prison had reached 207 officers, exceeding its benchmark figure for the first time. The regime gradually moved away from being consistently red/amber (indicating low numbers of available officers) and began to have more amber/green days.

## **Main judgements**

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### **Are prisoners treated justly?**

- 2.9 The Board is concerned that prisoners do not experience fair treatment in their access to food. Prisoners who are responsible for serving food are able to show favouritism to friends and to bully others, and officers have not always been able to control the situation (5.3, 7.15).
- 2.10 Too many prisoners are held at Wormwood Scrubs when they could have moved to a prison that is more able to meet their needs. Sometimes this is because the OMU has not completed an OASys (Offender Assessment System) assessment, and in other cases, a suitable transfer is prevented by population management policy (5.6, 11.1–11.2).
- 2.11 The prison has made progress in managing the backlog of complaints and it is now rare for prisoners' complaints to still be waiting for a response after a few weeks. Unfortunately, there are still some incidents of complaints being handled inappropriately or dismissed without good reason (5.7–5.8, 8.5).
- 2.12 Despite efforts to increase the availability of sessions, the Board has continued to be concerned by the problems experienced by legal professional visitors compared to other prisons. It is an essential requirement of the justice system that prisoners receive adequate legal advice, and this is put in jeopardy if legal visits are severely curtailed or cancelled. There are also similar problems with access to social visits (5.11–5.13, 7.9–7.10).
- 2.13 Last year, the Board found that prisoners who were removed from association in accordance with the Prison Rules were being held as “lodgers” in the First Night Centre and other areas. This meant that they were denied the safeguards for their welfare that would normally be operated by the Segregation Unit. The prison has now opened a Mentoring and Support Unit to cater for these prisoners. While there are still occasional “lodgers”, the Board considers that these prisoners are now being treated more fairly than in previous years (6.5–6.6).
- 2.14 Although there are some problems with the prison discipline system as a whole, individual adjudication hearings are generally carried out justly (6.7).

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

- 2.15 It remains the case that staff generally have a positive attitude towards prisoners and sympathise with the frustrations of prison life. The Board has observed examples of good practice, where prison staff have displayed kindness and compassion for prisoners in difficult circumstances (5.15–5.16).
- 2.16 The smoking ban which was introduced in March had been expected to cause a significant increase in violence and disorder over the summer. The prison had prepared for the end of smoking over a lengthy period and this effort paid off. Although the informal price of tobacco increased greatly, there were no serious violent incidents attributable to the smoking ban (5.14).
- 2.17 The physical environment in the prison has remained unacceptably poor in many residential areas. It is not right that a modern-day prison should have rat infestations in its grounds, unheated cells with broken windows, or insufficient access to water (7.1–7.6).

- 2.18 It is also concerning that Carillion (before they ceased operating) were unable to maintain the prison's fire-fighting equipment in working order, despite having previously failed an independent inspection (7.11–7.12).

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

- 2.19 The OMU has not been able to carry out its work effectively, as the majority of posts were unfilled throughout the year. Many prisoners have not received an OASys report, effectively blocking any move to a lower security category. Prisoners on licence who are recalled to prison do not receive their paperwork on time. Problems with the OMU are the most common reason that prisoners complain to the Board (11.1–11.3).
- 2.20 The Board is concerned that, in one case, there was a significant error in a prisoner's sentence calculation. The Board repeats its observation that incorrect sentence calculations carry a risk that prisoners may be released in error or detained for too long (11.5–11.6).
- 2.21 The CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company) struggles to provide statistics to demonstrate the help they provide to prisoners after their release (11.8). Far too many prisoners are released without any real chance of finding help with accommodation (11.9–11.10).

### **Main Areas for Development**

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#### **TO THE MINISTER**

- 2.22 The Board acknowledges that, following the collapse of Carillion, there has been progress with some capital building projects in the prison. However, Carillion's inadequate response to day-to-day maintenance tasks has continued under GFSL (Gov Facilities Services Ltd) and the Board still finds prisoners living (and staff working) in indecent and unacceptable conditions (7.1–7.6). The Board also wishes to highlight its concern at the state of the prison's fire safety equipment; it is deeply troubling that inspectors felt it necessary to issue an enforcement notice after their second visit to the prison (7.11–7.12).
- 2.23 During the year, there was a very serious self-harm incident, involving a prisoner who, it was later discovered, should not have been in prison. The prison's management took the view that they had faithfully followed a warrant for detention and any failings in the case lay with HMCTS (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service). It appears that neither the prison service nor the courts are solely responsible for what happened in this case, but the Board is concerned that there is no adequate safeguard to prevent another prisoner "falling into a gap" between two different criminal justice agencies (4.10). The Board is also concerned that, had there not been an investigation into the circumstances of the self-harm incident, this prisoner might have been detained for much longer.
- 2.24 Despite the increased numbers of staff, the CRC is still unable to adequately prepare prisoners for release. The aim of reducing reoffending is undermined by the difficulties in finding housing and employment for prisoners before they return to the community. The Board is also concerned by the lack of meaningful data that would demonstrate what outcomes are achieved by the CRC (11.7–11.10).

## **TO THE PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE**

- 2.25 The Board is still concerned by the ease with which prisoners can have access to drugs and weapons. What further resources will be put in place to tackle the flow of prohibited items into the prison?
- 2.26 The Board repeats its previous concern that transfers between prisons need to aid prisoners' progress through their sentence rather than being dictated by population management needs. The Board still encounters prisoners who are unable to move to a more suitable location because it is too far outside the London region (5.6).
- 2.27 The Board welcomes the long-standing plans to introduce in-cell telephones, which has proved to be a positive move at other prisons (7.13). The Board would welcome an indication of when this work is likely to take place.
- 2.28 The OMU has continued to struggle with staffing shortages, which significantly prevent it from carrying out vital work (11.1–11.3). What plans are in place to improve recruitment to OMU posts?
- 2.29 The Board was concerned to find a serious mistake in sentence calculation made at Wormwood Scrubs which, combined with errors at a second prison, led to a prisoner being released 10 months early (11.5).
- 2.30 The increase in the numbers of prison officers has had a clear positive effect on the day-to-day functioning of the prison. What plans are in place to ensure that staff are retained, and to ensure that experience is not lost given the influx of new officers?

## **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- 2.31 It is not acceptable that incidents involving the use of force are not followed up by the required paperwork (4.7).
- 2.32 There is insufficient control of prisoners at mealtimes, leading to favouritism, bullying and violence (5.3–5.5).
- 2.33 Last year, the Board reported that prisoners' access to effective legal representation was severely hampered by the operation of the legal visits system. Regrettably, the problems with legal visits have not yet been solved (5.11–5.13).
- 2.34 The Board notes that prisoners are sometimes released wearing prison-issue clothing, which then contributes to the shortages of clothing experienced by others (7.14).
- 2.35 Although the increased numbers of staff have made it easier to escort prisoners to hospital and to other outside healthcare appointments, there is still room for improvement before the level of access matches what would be available in the community (8.1–8.2).

## **Improvements**

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- 2.36 Staffing levels have increased over the course of the year, allowing the regime to move from a typical red status towards amber/green. This has enabled more activities to take place and allowed a significant improvement to the functioning of the daily regime.
- 2.37 The introduction of a smoking ban in the prison was carefully planned and well executed. The prison carefully anticipated the likely effects of the ban and it did not cause any significant violent incidents or disturbances (5.14, 8.6).

- 2.38 For several years, the Board has noted its concern that vulnerable prisoners were experiencing a limited regime as “lodgers” in the First Night Centre, without the normal safeguards provided in the Segregation Unit. The introduction of a Mentoring and Support Unit (the E4 landing), albeit with some initial problems, has improved this situation (6.5–6.6).
- 2.39 Following the Board’s previous findings about a significant backlog, the prison has successfully taken steps to reduce the number of outstanding complaints (5.8).

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

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- 3.1 HMP Wormwood Scrubs was built between 1875 and 1891. It is a Category B local male prison and young offender institution. It accepts both sentenced and remand prisoners over the age of 21 and Young Adults (those aged 18–21) on remand, both groups coming from its catchment area. It is a designated resettlement prison and has an operational capacity of 1,279.
- 3.2 About 60% of the prisoner population is convicted and serving a custodial sentence. The religious breakdown of prisoners is: Roman Catholic, 22%; Church of England, 10%; Muslim, 30%; Other Christian, 14%; No religion, 14%.
- 3.3 The establishment has five main wings, housing between 144 and 317 prisoners. Two of the wings offer single-cell accommodation. The First Night Centre holds up to 34 prisoners, usually for one night.
- 3.4 There is also a 55-place detoxification unit (the Conibeere Unit) and a residential Healthcare Centre with 17 beds.
- 3.5 There are on average 103 prisoners aged 50–59 and 30 prisoners aged over 60. This is similar to the previous year.
- 3.6 Education and training for prisoners is delivered by Novus, healthcare is delivered by Care UK, and maintenance is delivered by GFSL (who took over from Carillion).
- 3.7 The Community Rehabilitation Company is London CRC (MTCNovo).

### 4 SAFETY

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- 4.1 In the first half of the year, work on Safer Custody was limited by cross-deployment of staff. There could be as many as 5 alarm bell incidents in a single day and there were frequent outbreaks of violent behaviour.
- 4.2 Once staffing numbers had increased towards the benchmark, it became easier for the prison to manage incidents, but unfortunately it remains a dangerous place.
- 4.3 C Wing, which is the largest residential wing, developed an increasingly tense and troubled atmosphere throughout the year. Prisoners told the Board that they were reluctant to stay on that wing, and prisoners' perceptions that it was particularly dangerous were fuelled by 2 deaths in close succession.
- 4.4 The Board has observed that C Wing suffers more than other wings from litter and food being thrown on the floor; in April, prisoners were refusing to clean the external areas because an orange studded with razor blades had been thrown from a window in an attempt to damage the netting.
- 4.5 The Board remains concerned that C Wing is a noticeably more tense and difficult environment than the other main wings.
- 4.6 There have typically been around 50 incidents a month involving the use of force against prisoners, although this increased to 64 incidents in March. Around 20% of these incidents are due to prisoners assaulting members of prison staff. Use of force incidents are concentrated in C Wing and D Wing, as well as the Segregation Unit.
- 4.7 At the prison's Use of Force meeting in May, it was noted that the required paperwork was not always completed following an incident. For some months, Use of Force forms had not been completed for the majority of incidents, and there were some outstanding from the previous year.
- 4.8 CCTV has continued to be a valuable tool for reducing violence and the Board welcomes plans to extend coverage to A Wing and B Wing.
- 4.9 As in the previous year, a lack of resources made it difficult for the prison to tackle the supply of drugs. MDT (Mandatory Drug Testing) was effectively suspended until February, because of staff shortages.
- 4.10 In May, there was a very serious incident in which a prisoner suffering from mental illness was able to mutilate himself despite being on constant watch. It was later discovered that the prison had not been informed by the courts that this man should have been released almost 2 weeks before the incident. The staff who were on the scene acted swiftly to provide medical help, and then to organise a hospital place once they realised they could not lawfully keep him in the prison. However, the incident raised some troubling questions, which are referred to the Minister.
- 4.11 The Board regrets that there were 3 deaths in custody during the year. This includes one prisoner who died overnight on the first day of the reporting year. In one case, the death of a prisoner was referred to the police; as a result, three other prisoners were tried for murder and were subsequently acquitted.

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

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- 5.1 On average, around a third of those held in the prison are foreign nationals. The number of immigration detainees (held under executive powers and not serving a prison sentence) has reduced; there were 35 detainees at the time of the inspection in August. However, the Board still considers that Wormwood Scrubs is not an appropriate place for them.
- 5.2 There were once again occasional complaints from prisoner representatives that halal and non-halal kitchen equipment was not adequately separated. Halal food is available, but does not always appear as appetising as the other options. The Board was satisfied with the provisions made for food during Ramadan.
- 5.3 A persistent theme among prisoners' complaints – and the Board's own observations – is a lack of fairness in serving food. The Board has focused its monitoring on evening meals for much of the year and regrets to report that there is frequently too little experienced supervision of the hotplate, allowing favouritism and bullying over food to go unchecked.
- 5.4 In August, there was a serious violent incident on C Wing involving 20 prisoners, and in which an officer was injured. Prisoners told the Board that control over portion sizes was a factor in the tensions that had built up to this incident.
- 5.5 The Board also observed that smaller or non-residential units (e.g. Reception) sometimes received limited choices of meal compared to the main wings.
- 5.6 The Board continues to meet prisoners who wish to transfer to another prison, perhaps to be near family or to access courses that are not available locally, but are unable to move on. Often, the difficulty seems to lie with population management policy, and the situation can be just as frustrating for prison officers as it is for prisoners. Transfer decisions should place more emphasis on meeting individual prisoners' needs rather than managing numbers of people in different regions.
- 5.7 The Board continues to find isolated incidents of complaints about staff being handled inappropriately. In one case, a prisoner made a confidential complaint directly to the Governor, claiming that a particular officer had told people he was a sex offender. The complaint had not been answered by the Governor, but by a Custodial Manager, who dismissed the complaint on the grounds that the officer in question would not have done that.
- 5.8 The prison has continued to manage the backlog of complaints and the Board notes that the vast majority of prisoners' complaints are resolved within a few weeks.
- 5.9 The Board continues to receive complaints from prisoners who believe that they have not been fairly paid for each day's work. The prison generally acts quickly to rectify any errors, but the system by which prisoners' attendance at different activities is confirmed, and their pay processed, is unnecessarily complex.
- 5.10 There are also occasions when prisoners are given ad hoc tasks in an effort to keep them occupied on the wings, but this is misinterpreted as paid work. In these cases, the prisoner does not receive any money but may gain a sense of frustration or unfairness.
- 5.11 There are still difficulties with the operation of legal visits, and several solicitors have told the Board that Wormwood Scrubs is significantly worse than other prisons in this respect.

- 5.12 On one morning, the Board spoke to 3 solicitors, who had each spent more than 45 minutes of a 2 hour visit waiting to get into the prison. Other legal representatives told the Board that they had only been able to see their clients for 25 minutes, or had missed the visit entirely. The booking system also attracted complaints; one solicitor said that it took a week to get a response to an email, whereas other prisons responded within an hour.
- 5.13 Despite the prison's attempts to mitigate the problems by adding extra legal visits session, the Board is still concerned that prisoners are being denied access to effective legal representation.
- 5.14 Once smoking had been banned within the prison, possession of tobacco became an offence. The prison acted fairly in allowing a grace period, in which prisoners using up their existing supplies would be treated leniently. The penalties for possessing tobacco were gradually increased over 3 months, at which point it would be dealt with by adjudication.
- 5.15 On a positive note, there have been several occasions throughout the year when staff have gone beyond what was required of them to treat prisoners with compassion, for example arranging for a terminally ill prisoner to see his family.
- 5.16 A small number of transgender prisoners have been held in the prison during the year, and the Board has always found that they have been treated with sensitivity.
- 5.17 The Chaplaincy remains an example of good practice, not only meeting prisoners' religious needs but also providing much needed pastoral care.

## 6 SEGREGATION UNIT

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- 6.1 The Segregation Unit comprises 18 single cells located on the upper floor, and two special cells (bare rooms with CCTV cameras in the corners) on the ground floor. There is a small exercise yard, shared with the Conibeere Unit.
- 6.2 The general standard of cleanliness is good and the unit's officers do a good job of managing some very challenging prisoners. The overall atmosphere of the unit tends to be supportive.
- 6.3 SRBs (Segregation Review Boards) are held weekly and newly segregated prisoners are reviewed within 72 hours. Attempts by the prison to schedule SRBs at a fixed time each week have not been entirely successful throughout the year, with the result that too many SRBs take place in the absence of a Board member.
- 6.4 The Segregation Unit informs the Board whenever they receive a prisoner. The process for notifying the Board has moved to an electronic system, which has greatly reduced the possibility that information might be missed.
- 6.5 For several years, the Board has been concerned that vulnerable prisoners were being placed as "lodgers" in the First Night Centre, where they received a limited regime and also fell outside of the safeguards provided in the Segregation Unit. A number of plans to address this had not come to fruition. In July, the E4 landing was converted to the Mentoring and Support Unit, and most of the "lodger" prisoners were able to move there, freeing up more space in the First Night Centre.
- 6.6 Initially, the regime on E4 was limited and there were teething troubles, such as the unit not being physically separated from prisoners on the E3 landing below. Managers were anxious to combat the false perception that the unit was for sex offenders, with mixed success. By March, E4 had gained a consistent regime and rules and a transition plan to help prisoners move on to settled accommodation elsewhere in the prison.
- 6.7 The Board generally finds that adjudications are carried out in a fair and professional manner. However too many adjudications do not progress because the evidence is unclear or insufficient, and the backlog has reached over 200 at its peak. The adjudication standardisation meeting was revived during the year, and the prison's management is taking a more active approach to monitoring adjudications.

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

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- 7.1 Last year, the Board expressed very serious concerns about Carillion's ability to maintain the fabric of the prison. Unfortunately, this situation continued without improvement until Carillion eventually entered liquidation in January. When maintenance was transferred to GFSL, there was a backlog of over 2000 tasks to complete.
- 7.2 Although the additional funding provided in the latter half of the year has helped with some large-scale projects to improve the physical environment, GFSL still struggles with the day-to-day minor repairs and smaller maintenance tasks.
- 7.3 Over the course of the year, the Board found:
- Unacceptable temperatures throughout the year
  - Showers either cold or scalding hot, sometimes leading to fights over access to any that worked properly
  - A prisoner who had spent over a week in a cell with no water supply and no window (during a cold winter)
  - Rat infestations in external areas
  - D Wing lost network access for several days after rodents chewed through cabling
  - Staff working in reception and the kitchen using convection heaters to stay warm
  - Difficulties in getting bedding, kettles, clean clothing etc.
  - No access to toilet paper in C Wing as supplies had run out
  - Piles of litter in the central courtyard
- 7.4 There has been inadequate maintenance of the prison's lifts and lengthy delays in carrying out repairs. In September, a Board member observed a wheelchair user being carried down the stairs from the visits hall. On other occasions, prisoners were unable see their visitors at all. In December, the Board was told that the lift would be fixed by March; by the end of the reporting year, this estimate had been pushed back to July. Several other lifts have also been out of service, sometimes making it difficult for food to be brought from the kitchen to the wings.
- 7.5 By the end of December, there were multiple problems with the boilers and half the prison had been unheated for 6 weeks, including cells that had no window and were open to the elements. There had also been failures in the electricity supply and cell bell system in D Wing, making it unsuitable for accommodation. The Board wrote urgently to Sam Gyimah, the Minister at that time, to bring the situation to his attention. After Christmas, more resources were promised to fix the heating, lighting and electricity supply.
- 7.6 The window replacement programme continued, although progress has been slow. Work has concentrated on the upper floors (to prevent packages being thrown in) and there are still too many cells with broken windows around the perimeter.
- 7.7 A project to lay new flooring in C Wing was completed in May.
- 7.8 The visits hall was improved by the addition of some new furniture and cleaning the toilets. The separate visitors' centre (where visitors arrive before going inside the prison) is welcoming and clean; a visit in December found that the lockers were in working order and there were plenty of information leaflets.

- 7.9 Changes to the layout of the visits reception made the search area smaller and less efficient, with visitors being required to queue on a staircase. Prisoners are sometimes brought late to the afternoon visits session, leading to frustration at being denied the time with their families to which they are entitled.
- 7.10 During a random check of an afternoon visiting session starting at 1400, the Board found that social visitors were not being admitted at 1420, and some were still queueing to enter the prison at 1430.
- 7.11 In May last year, an inspection by CPFIG (Crown Premises Fire Inspection Group) found insufficient fire-fighting equipment and hundreds of failed emergency lights. The Board received the inspection report and action plan in July; there were plans to replace 400 of the 600 broken emergency lights and to purchase new misting equipment.
- 7.12 CPFIG carried out another inspection in October and subsequently issued an enforcement notice against Carillion. The Board requested a meeting with the inspectors to discuss its concerns, although much of the fire equipment had been replaced at this point. The enforcement notice was finally lifted in December.
- 7.13 The prison has received approval to install in-cell telephones, but work has not yet begun on this project. The Board has seen this system working well on a visit to another prison, and would welcome its introduction at Wormwood Scrubs.
- 7.14 Shortages of basic items, such as radios and kettles, have continued this year. The prison still finds it difficult to provide enough clothing at times, even though too many prisoners are released still wearing prison-issue items.
- 7.15 The Board has observed prisoners' meals throughout the year. The quality is variable, with some menu items appearing to be more popular than others. Portion control is not well managed and there is plenty of scope for favouritism when serving, leading to insufficient food for others. The daily food budget in September was £2.04.
- 7.16 The "prisoner information points", where knowledgeable prisoners provide help and guidance to their peers, continue to be a helpful resource. However, there is still a need to take care that prisoners' confidentiality is preserved if their applications are not handled by staff members.

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

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- 8.1 The standard of medical care remains generally acceptable. However, there are still administrative problems in getting prisoners to appointments, and the prison does not always provide the same level of access to healthcare that would be available in the community.
- 8.2 In the first half of the year, the number of cancelled appointments remained high. As the number of staff increased over the year, it gradually became easier to provide hospital escorts and in December, the prison was able to arrange 35 hospital visits. However, this continues to be an area of concern.
- 8.3 There have also been intermittent difficulties in providing an adequate regime in the Healthcare Centre. In September, there were 4 prisoners each requiring a 4-officer unlock protocol. This meant that it was not possible for those prisoners to have meaningful access to the regime, given the available numbers of staff.
- 8.4 The physical environment of the Healthcare Centre has seen some improvements and officers working there are generally alert to the individual needs of prisoners in their care. The Board occasionally receives complaints about nurses being discourteous.
- 8.5 Healthcare complaints are handled by a separate system to other prison complaints, and the prison must take care that prisoners have free access to the complaint forms without being observed by nursing staff.
- 8.6 Smoking was banned in the Healthcare Centre before the rest of the prison introduced a smoke-free policy, and this change was introduced without any significant problems.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

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- 9.1 The Board continues to see low attendance at education. In June, 30% of prisoners did not attend when expected. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and barbering courses were full, but English and numeracy classes were less well attended. A payment scheme was put in place to act as an incentive for prisoners to attend classes.
- 9.2 In the earlier part of the year, some prisoners told the Board that there were conflicts in the regime and they were worried about missing their evening meal if they went to education. Staff agreed with this assessment, although the Board was assured that prisoners would receive a meal albeit not the same one they had chosen from the menu.
- 9.3 The library was often busy with prisoners who had been sent there through the education department, but access was more difficult for visits direct from the wings.
- 9.4 The main wings provide book rooms, which aim to make up for poor attendance in the library. The Board has consistently found these to be of variable quality. A monitoring visit in June found C Wing's book room to be a helpful resource, while others were in poor condition or locked.

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

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- 10.1 The Board remains satisfied that the available work activities are chosen to give prisoners some meaningful skills. The prison continues to look for new work and training opportunities that might be of benefit to prisoners.
- 10.2 Although the number of purposeful activity places has been increased, with the aim of every prisoner being occupied for at least half the day, this has sometimes meant that less motivated prisoners fill the extra places and attendance can suffer as a result.
- 10.3 Last year, the Board reported improved attendance at the laundry. Unfortunately this was not maintained, and attendance was poor for the first half of the year. On one visit, the Board found 27 prisoners allocated to the laundry (out of a capacity of 44); only 17 had actually arrived to work.
- 10.4 A check on the Amber Train workshop (which teaches railway maintenance skills) found the building being used to store broken furniture and rotting boxes containing prisoners' confidential files.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

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- 11.1 Once again, staffing shortages have significantly prevented the OMU from carrying out its work and some resettlement functions have seen little meaningful improvement. In June, the Board encountered a prisoner who had been waiting for 2 years to move to a Category C prison, but did not have an OASys report; with only 4.5 full-time equivalent staff out of 12, the OMU was not able to provide OASys reports. On some occasions, the Board visited the OMU during working hours to find nobody present.
- 11.2 In order to control the backlog of over 250 OASys reports, and with only 4 out of 12 posts filled for much of the year, OASys work had ceased except for Category D prisoners.
- 11.3 The OMU is also required to prepare recall packs within 72 hours; this deadline was consistently missed.
- 11.4 Similarly, probation was also under-staffed, with only 2 out of 7 posts filled in February. At the start of the reporting year, probation staff had withdrawn from the wings and were only able to see prisoners who could be escorted to an interview room.
- 11.5 In December, the Board became aware of a prisoner serving an 8-year s226A Extended Determinate Sentence. Wormwood Scrubs had incorrectly calculated his release date using the form for a s227 Extended Sentence. He was later transferred to another prison where, despite further checks of the calculation, the mistake was not spotted and he was released 10 months early. The Board was dismayed that the prison management did not appear to be troubled by this mistake.
- 11.6 Although sentencing law is a complex area, it is crucial that the prison accurately calculates release dates. The alternative is that prisoners are unlawfully detained beyond their sentence or are released in error.
- 11.7 Staffing levels in the CRC have varied over the course of the year. By May, BCST2 (Basic Custody Screening Tool, part 2) resettlement plans were being produced for 95% of prisoners, a considerable improvement compared to 60% the previous year.
- 11.8 The CRC struggles to provide information regarding outcomes for prisoners who need help with housing, employment or benefits after their release.
- 11.9 The Board remains concerned by the availability of help with housing. In August, St Mungo's were able to see 70 prisoners, but told the Board that places in hostels were very limited and it was impossible to arrange private accommodation because the local authority would delay payment to the landlord.
- 11.10 The CRC appeared to be meeting their commitment to refer prisoners to St Mungo's, but, in reality, the prisoners referred would not receive any help unless they were within a month of their release date.
- 11.11 As a local prison, the Board would expect Wormwood Scrubs to grant ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) relatively rarely compared to a prison focusing on resettlement. Nevertheless, it is disappointing to note that, as a result of the lack of OMU staff, ROTL has been effectively unavailable even in cases where policy might allow it.

## C Work of the Board

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<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended complement of Board members	24
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	17
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	19
Total number of visits to the establishment	453

## D Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	16	24
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	1	6
C	Equality	6	11
D	Purposeful activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	12	35
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	18	42
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	3	14
F	Food and kitchens	21	14
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	49	80
H 1	Property within this establishment	30	68
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	39	35
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	13	23
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	55	94
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	41	57
K	Transfers	22	44
L	Other	48	65
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	374	610