



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Northumberland

for reporting Year
1st January to 31st December 2018

Published
June 2019



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

1. The Board has found no evidence of deliberate unfairness or inhumane treatment.
2. The Board has three continuing concerns where it believes the system is failing prisoners:
 - First, where a man is assessed as needing inpatient psychiatric treatment but an appropriate place cannot be obtained in a reasonable time. We consider that meeting such needs should not depend solely on the ability of staff to negotiate with relevant providers.
 - Similarly, where a prisoner's categorisation is increased to category B, there have been several instances where prisoners have had to remain segregated until a place can be found at a suitable prison.
 - Finally, in HMP Northumberland there are some 30 men who have committed sexual offences who are category D prisoners but are stuck in a category C prison because there are insufficient suitable places available. If a place were available, the nearest prison offering this facility is over 200 miles away, which can be unhelpful to maintaining family ties.

Are prisoners treated humanely?

3. In the instances we refer to above, it is the failure of the system rather than prison staff that concerns us. We consider that all these men, including those awaiting transfer, are treated humanely by those responsible for their care, despite their behaviour often being challenging.

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

4. For a minority of prisoners, serving their sentence and being released works well. These men usually have taken advantage of the time and facilities offered to prepare themselves to resume life in the community. The increasing use of ROTL and HDC supports them, as does living on Community Links, opened in 2017.
5. For many, however, the experience is less positive: life in the prison does not fundamentally change their circumstances, their perceptions or their ability to cope with the pressures and temptations which contributed to their offence in the first place. The best efforts of prison staff can only go so far in supporting them on this journey.
6. Although the 12-week target for reviewing prisoners nearing release is usually met, the preparations do not allay their anxieties about where they will live or how they will earn a living. Our understanding is that the problems in finding accommodation for men on release have continued over the past year.

Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

7. In view of the difficulty and delay in finding appropriate placements for men with complex mental health needs, is the Minister satisfied that the arrangements are adequate?
8. Is the Minister content that prisoners whose category is increased are held in segregation until appropriate places can be found?
9. What action is planned to make available more category D places for men convicted of sexual offences?
10. We have ongoing concerns about men released without an address for their first night, when they are particularly vulnerable. We are advised that this issue is likely to be included in Key Performance Targets in the near future. Could the Minister confirm that this is so?
11. We repeat our concerns about the ability of prisoners being able to maintain family ties throughout their sentence when they are at a distance from their families? Is the Minister content that action is being taken to change this situation? (Para 85)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

TO THE DIRECTOR

12. Is the Director satisfied with the range of training and work open to vulnerable prisoners to equip them for employment upon release?
13. In view of the level of unemployment (130) does the Director have plans to increase the overall employment opportunities available? (Para 86)

Improvements

14. Problems related to drugs and violence persist with the former fuelling the latter. However, HMP Northumberland is making efforts to curtail both drug demand and supply. Similarly, there is a structured approach to dealing with and reporting violence. The Board is particularly pleased to note the improved support for prisoners on Assessment, Care in Custody and Treatment (ACCT). There was one death and no serious incident during 2018.
15. The Board commends the ongoing level of investment in improving the estate through a continuing programme of improvements to the fabric of the estate, including upgrading showers and the standard of cells. The on-going purge on graffiti is successful.
16. Efforts to address the number of adjudications that break down due to poor administration are being rewarded.

17. The introduction of key workers was managed well and there is early evidence that benefits are being realised.
18. A period of high staff turnover has resulted in a stronger team. The ability of the prison to continue to perform during the 'Beast from the East' snowstorm was notable, given its isolation, and a testament to the morale of the staff.
19. The re-opening of a previously closed house block, despite reduced numbers, was a welcome achievement as it offers a different kind of environment for mains prisoners on longer sentences. We note also the increased support to a small number of prisoners whose health is fragile on account of illness, disability or ageing.

3 Description of Establishment

20. HMP Northumberland is the furthest north of any prison in England, over 40 miles from its nearest neighbours. Most of the buildings date back to 1972 when the former Acklington prison was created, and few of the house blocks where prisoners live match modern purpose-built standards. One of the hangars from the former airfield still houses workshops and offices. Maintenance of this large site with its older buildings is a continuing challenge, as is managing a prison where much of the accommodation is in individual buildings which are widely dispersed, a reflection of its history as two separate prisons. Movements from wings to education and work places, as well as health care, visits and worship locations, mean walking some distance across the exposed site in all weather. This has implications for the operation of an efficient regime and timetabling activities such as visits to the gyms and the two libraries.
21. This adult male category C prison retains its capacity (Certified Normal Accommodation) of 1348, with an average unlock in December 2018 of 1340. Just under 80% of the residents class themselves as White British, with 11-18% Travellers or Gypsies at any one time; fewer than 4% are foreign nationals. About 12% (160) are over 55 and the oldest is over 90. There are no remand prisoner.
22. The configuration of the 15 resident house blocks remains broadly as previously described (five VP wings, a 40-place Drug and Alcohol Recovery Unit and the remainder in normal location). The 20-place residence for prisoners with more freedoms continued to develop during the year supported by ROTL and HDC. In December we were pleased to see the re-opening of part of a house block closed in 2017; this now offers a more stable and relaxed environment for 20 men on longer sentences.
23. The prison is in its sixth year of operation by Sodexo, with all other providers remaining the same during 2018. Healthcare is commissioned by NHS Cumbria and the North East Offender Health Commissioning Unit and the prison contracts with NOVUS for education. Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (part of Sodexo) continues to commission services for prisoners due for release. The work of NEPACS (the North East Prison After Care Society) who provide support to prisoners' families through volunteers and paid staff expanded further during the year. Prisoners also receive direct support from 20-30 local and national agencies, who work independently or alongside prison staff.
24. During this last year, several significant changes have taken place, notably the smooth transition to a non-smoking prison in January, the installation of in-cell telephony and the introduction of key workers across all wings from February to November. We would also like to draw attention to the overall improvement in the external environment, to the credit of the workers on ROTL and the gardening team: it is easy to underestimate the impression given to visitors, especially relatives and friends, of clean and attractive grounds. Similarly, we commend the efforts of the groups involved in opening the prison shop and the construction of the War Memorial. The latter provided the focus for the Act of Remembrance in November.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

25. At the beginning of 2018, the Board was very aware of the HMIP criticisms of safety across the prison and the high number of prisoners (58%) who, in response to their survey, said they did not feel safe. In our last Report we attributed some of this to the availability of drugs, particularly NPS, and outlined the prison's stated strategy to combat this.
26. During 2018, this work continued and we have monitored how the prison has increased efforts to identify and control levels of violence and self-harm, improve support to residents at risk, reduce the level of drugs coming into the establishment and exact due punishment for anyone involved in these processes.
27. Northumberland has its share of residents who do not cope well with imprisonment. This is exacerbated by factors such as debt and vulnerability through substance misuse. We have seen this manifested in adjudications where a prisoner appears to have been compelled by others to break the rules by hiding banned items, running errands or carrying out violence. Concerns are raised when someone refuses to disclose why they are doing so and on behalf of whom.
28. We refer in para. 16 to progress in improving the processing and paperwork for adjudications. Although this is not easy to quantify, we conclude that ensuring residents who have behaved inappropriately towards others are held accountable for their actions has a positive impact on prisoner safety.
29. The extensive networks across prisons often means prisoners who feel at risk hide behind their door, self-harm and sometimes contemplate suicide. We have occasionally been aware of prisoners who break the rules or contravene their license once released because prison has become for them the safer option.
30. Our previous report welcomed the creation of separate accommodation for prisoners who otherwise would self-isolate and we were pleased to see in 2018 a focus on addressing self-harm and improving the management of residents on ACCTs through the following:
- Independent reviewing of individual AssessmentCare in Custody and Treatment (ACCT) books has improved adherence to the review process by identifying good practice and drawing attention to shortcomings; the relevant staff are usually present at ACCT reviews, documentation and handover arrangements have improved, and realistic plans to support progress are recorded.
 - Ensuring a suitable level of reviewers and assessors and that all Prison Custody Officers (PCOs) receive basic ACCT training.
 - Scrutinising all incidents of self-harm every week to try to identify common themes such as when and where; by far the most common means of self-harm is cutting.
 - Making distraction packs available across the prison and regularly updating their contents.
 - Ensuring that new arrivals have the chance to telephone their family.
31. This comprehensive approach has been supported by the introduction of key workers, which we address elsewhere (para 93). The statistics around self-harm are not

straightforward because the overall totals include prolific self-harmers. Despite this, and fluctuations during the year, the picture is more stable with an average of 60 incidents a month involving 40 prisoners. Perceived nationally as a downward trend, and compares favourably with comparator prisons.

32. Towards the end of 2018 the prison conducted a survey asking residents about their levels of debt. 578 responded (43%), 94% of whom were on 3 main house blocks. The main reason given for debt was drugs, followed by vapes, as well as low levels of pay. The prison has said it intends to pursue this further by trying to identify whether someone is in debt on arrival and checking out rates of pay with comparable prisons. We will watch this carefully in 2019.
33. Overall our conclusion is that prison staff are increasingly aware of what can precipitate self-harm and are better equipped to respond appropriately. This is evidenced by the decreasing level of incidents and an overall improvement in the prison's position relative to its comparator group.
34. Prisoners who are vulnerable tend to be victims of violence, as do staff, as well as those men who themselves generate violence. We welcome the work put in place in 2018 to identify and reduce those situations which give rise to violence, control violence when it arises and analyse events to learn from them.
35. A Violence Reduction Manager was appointed as part of the Safer Custody Team and the weekly meetings were introduced where detailed information is shared and each violent event is looked at in detail. A weekly summary is also published to help raise awareness and this shows that the majority of house blocks remain violence-free for several weeks. This has been backed up by the introduction of the CSIP (Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan) model to improve violence management. In terms of overall performance, the prison has improved, especially when compared with like establishments. Levels of violence are contained and appear to be levelling out compared to a national rising trend.
36. As part of its wider strategy the prison announced that peer mentors would be appointed to help combat violence. For various reasons this was not implemented within the original time-scale, with the first mentors taking up post towards the end of the year whilst others were still in training. The Board welcomes this step, as peer mentors in other aspects of prison life have been shown to make a difference by supporting their fellows. We plan to monitor this in 2019.
37. Whilst we recognised that sometimes events which appear to be random can escalate into serious incidents, we think it is worthy of note that there were no events of this order during 2018, the command suite was not opened and help in the form of a Tornado team was not called in from elsewhere.
38. Another major element in keeping prisons safe is reducing the effect of drugs, their availability, the power they enable some residents to exert and the negative consequences for health. In 2018 there was a drive both to reduce the level of drugs coming into the prison and to find them if they did.
39. Like other prisons, Northumberland experienced an increase in the levels of NPS arriving through the impregnation of correspondence. In a labour-intensive exercise, where there were grounds to believe that NPS was present, mail was withheld by Security, not without risk to those who handled it. The Board occasionally received complaints from prisoners about the way that this was handled. As best we could judge the measures

taken locally were both proportionate and fair; and we understand that local practice was broadly in line with the national guidance that was subsequently issued. It is disappointing that national guidance was not available sooner. At the time of writing, the prison has installed an extra photo-copier and is looking to purchase an itemiser, which detects the presence of drugs in paper and similar materials.

40. A second important strand in halting the supply of drugs was the arrival of two drug detection dogs and their handler, which continue to be instrumental in the detection of drugs as well as acting as a deterrent to visitors trying to bring them in. We understand that to make maximum use of the dogs the prison is considering funding a second dog handler.
41. In 2018 the legal hurdles to the use of body scanners to detect drugs were overcome and towards the end of the year the equipment previously purchased for Northumberland was brought into use. Strict guidelines mean that this can be deployed only when there is intelligence to suggest that a prisoner has drugs about his person.
42. Despite these increased measures the impact on the evidence of the reduced availability of drugs and drug use trickles through slowly. The mandatory drug testing target of 26.4%, which now includes psychoactive substances, is being met and seems to be decreasing. The relative position of the prison against its comparators is still low, however, as they are all steadily improving.
43. Unfortunately, staff occasionally become involved in covert operations to bring drugs into prisons. The Board welcomed the result of a joint operation with the police after which a former staff member received a prison sentence. Staff are regularly searched.
44. 2018 saw one death in custody, compared with five in each of the two previous years. Every death in custody is distressing for relatives, friends and staff. We share their concerns that the longer it takes for an inquest to take place, the more that distress is prolonged and questions of public interest may remain unanswered.
45. At the beginning of the year there were ten inquests outstanding. The Prison and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) report on four of these, one dating back to March 2016, had not been received. The Board made enquiries of the senior coroner for Northumberland and was reassured that he is keen to ensure that preliminary hearings and inquests are scheduled as soon as possible. By the end of 2018 four inquests had been completed and dates set for another four. Four of the ten deaths have been confirmed as natural causes and four self-inflicted; conclusions are outstanding on three, including the one in 2018. Police enquiries are continuing on two deaths, one dating back to early 2016 and the Board would like to see this resolved.
46. The Board welcomes the prison's prompt response to issues raised by PPO reports, especially the identification and management of prisoners at risk

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

47. In January 2019, 1098 (c. 80%) of residents at the prison reported themselves as White British. This marks a reduction from 87% last year. This was counterbalanced by a commensurate growth in the number identifying as Gypsy or Irish Travellers. The minority of Asian and Black British residents has seen a slight increase in the past twelve months, although it remains low.
48. The profile of the prison population in terms of age and protected characteristics has remained broadly similar over recent years. With such small numbers in these groups it is inevitable that much of the daily work concentrates on the needs of the majority. We are pleased to report however that the prison now has in place a robust structure to ensure that they do not lose sight of the needs of the minorities. All new staff receive diversity and inclusion training and the level of DIRF reports submitted continues to be extremely low. (Para 57)
49. The following table sets out the main groups in question:

Group	Number	Percentage of Total Population
Over 50 years	236	17.5%
21-25 years	176	13%
Foreign nationals	47	3.4%
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller	147*	11%
Gay, bisexual	36	2.7%
Transgender	4	0.2%
Disability, mental health	207	15%
Disability, learning difficulties	75	5.5%
Disability, reduced mobility	97	7%
Disability, visual impairment	37	2.7%
Disability hearing impairment	42	3%
Veterans	39	3%

N.B.

Figures rounded to next decimal point.

*These figures vary by up to 100 across the year and this may relate to disclosure.

There are designated officers with responsibility for leading and liaising with groups of older prisoners, those with disability, foreign nationals, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, veterans, LGBTQ and transgender residents.

50. The number of over 50 year old residents has increased slightly, with the oldest prisoner being in his nineties. We have commented in previous reports on the outstanding work carried out to engage with this older age group and it has been commended by Age UK, with whom working links continue. Our view is that continuing developments are keeping pace with the expected gradual increase in this group of prisoners. This year, modifying a mains house block to accommodate 20 residents on longer sentences has been a useful addition to the provision on vulnerable prisoner wings. We note that the changes in the arrangements for physical education described in para. 83 offer options to attract older men and increase mobility.
51. Another area where the prison has been commended, including the receipt of a national award by a member of staff, was for its work on accommodating the needs of the LGBT population and raising awareness of it, inside the prison and an active LGBT group has

been formed. Four residents are undergoing gender reassignment. Two are already located on a house block with in-cell showers and the others will join them when places are available. The Board commends the prison's sensitivity to the needs of these particular residents.

52. Much of the work with minorities, and also with the most needy residents, is regularly supported by the multi-faith chaplaincy team, who, in addition to their role in the spiritual life of the prison, provide a breadth of pastoral duties and support to individuals, often with the involvement of third sector partners.
53. Early in 2018, the Board identified five foreign nationals detained under IS91, as a consequence of which they were entitled to similar rights to remand prisoners. This is clearly inconsistent with the regime at HMP Northumberland and we discussed it with the Director, who was already aware of the situation and had taken steps to resolve it. Despite strenuous efforts on the part of the prison, throughout the year there remained a small number of men in a similar situation. As far as we know, they were treated as flexibly as the regime could allow and have indicated that this was acceptable.
54. The Board had some concerns that none of the induction booklets for newly arrived residents is in a language other than English. However, we were reassured to learn that these residents do have access to interpreters via telephone.
55. Other notable developments during 2018 include:
 - The introduction of BOBs (Big Orange Boxes) on the two induction wings and the largest of the others. These wellbeing packs, including material on topics such as managing anger, bereavement and anxiety, have been welcomed by residents.
 - The running of Confidence Cafes each month on the VP wings offers an informal setting for sharing queries and worries, supported by peers.
 - With the assistance of the woodworking class, a disused workshop was transformed into a multi-faith worship and prayer room, which is more accessible from areas of the prison at a distance from the chapel. Friday prayers now take place there.
 - The encouragement and support to residents through the year to mark key religious festivals such as Ramadan and other important events such as Black History Month.
56. Probably the most symbolic achievement of the year was the creation of a permanent memorial to veterans and victims of war, as well as those who worked on the site when it was a military airbase. The memorial, and the accompanying booklet, were designed and put together through the combined efforts of students on several different courses and stands where many people pass it each day. The dedication ceremony was attended not only by residents and staff but also representatives of the local community. The memorial was the focus of the prison's Act of Remembrance on 11 November.
57. The prison averages five Discrimination Incident Report Forms (DIRF) reports per month, similar to the pattern in 2017. The Board is satisfied that these are dealt with effectively and as quickly as is reasonably possible and none gave rise to serious concerns. The number of complaints received during the year has been fairly constant but the prison staff have improved their diligence in responding within required timescales. The level of applications to the IMB is significantly lower than those to the prison (about 1:10)

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

58. The Care and Separation Unit (CSU) has seen an occupancy of 50-60% of its 18 cells over the year. Compared with full or almost full occupancy throughout much of 2017. This is attributed to a systematic change in the way prison deals with incidents on the house blocks and improved management of the CSU.
59. Key issues relating to the CSU remain as we have previously documented:
- The temperatures are normally adequate, but during colder spells staff are aware of the need to provide prisoners with extra blankets promptly or encourage them to wear additional clothing.
 - Lower numbers mean that CSU residents are offered a shower at least on alternate days.
 - This also makes it easier for them to have 30 minutes on the exercise yard each day given the limitations documented in last year's report.
60. The Board is satisfied that the prison is aware of the key issues relating to the CSU. The unit is usually clean, some cells have been re-decorated and most of the furniture matches standards on the wings. Our view is that these issues cannot be resolved in the current location, but there is no pressing need for an alternative and there is no easy answer. An additional factor however is the availability of rooms in which to conduct reviews and adjudications, especially on the days in the month when the Independent Adjudicator is present. Efforts of the CSU staff to ensure that there is multi-disciplinary representation at review boards can be thwarted if the timing is deferred until adjudications are completed
61. Members regularly comment on the very strong positive relationships between CSU staff and residents. It also notes that on the occasions when staff from elsewhere are covering for the regular CSU team, there can be a detrimental impact on behaviour of prisoners. It is during these periods when notifications to the IMB of new arrivals are sometimes overlooked or there is confusion about how the protocol operates. As we said in our last report, we do not believe this was intentional.
62. The Board welcomes a significant reduction in the number of residents with ACCTs being put in the CSU to the point where it has become rare. (Reduction from 23% across January to 5% or less in December.)
63. Alongside the quality assurance work carried out by the prison the Board conducted a review of the quality of care maps and was satisfied these were of an acceptable standard at the time of monitoring.
64. Those segregation reviews observed by IMB members were conducted fairly and sensitively. It is also noticeable that Healthcare provided advice on most prisoners and endeavoured to attend reviews, as did members of the chaplaincy team and other support agencies such as the DART team, where relevant

7. ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

65. The maintenance of an estate with older buildings and services is a continuing challenge and we are aware that hard work goes on behind the scenes to ensure a constant supply of heating, water and electricity to all buildings on the site, such as upgrading boilers and other parts of the infrastructure. There was also a drive to improve cell standards, with the removal of graffiti and unauthorized wall-coverings, with noticeable effects. Many residents look after their cells well, which we believe is an important part of encouraging respect. Some areas have been redecorated and the programme of upgrading showers has continued through the year.
66. In our last Report we commented on the improvement in the condition of the grounds outside the perimeter fence thanks to the work of men on release on temporary licence (ROTL). This has continued and they and the gardening team are to be congratulated on the appearance of the whole estate, where litter has been reduced and gardens are improving. During cold weather, roads and pathways across the site have been gritted early in the day to ensure safe passage of both vehicles and pedestrians. This was evident during the heavy snowfalls and severe frosts in late winter 2017/18. Prison staff should also be commended for managing to get to the prison during this period and to our knowledge no resident was disadvantaged during the inclement weather.
67. As the Board said in its last report, one house block was deemed unsafe and closed in July 2017. A consequence of this was that up to 20 single cells on one house block had two occupants for the rest of that year and most of 2018 to accommodate men from the one that had closed. It is to the credit of residents and staff that this proved uneventful, helped by additional facilities such as a fitness suite and clear guidelines about how cells were allocated. December saw the reopening of the original wing and the Board welcomed the prison's decision to adapt it for older mains prisoners serving long term sentences. By the end of the year, after a carefully managed application and selection process, 20 residents were enjoying the greater flexibility the accommodation affords.
68. In other developments a house block nearer to Reception became the induction wing for new residents in the mains estate. As it had previously accommodated non-drug users the transition required the relocation of some residents. This was handled carefully, residents were permitted to express preferences for new house block accommodation and where possible, safe and reasonable, this was arranged. The Board commends the prison on the management of this process, which also involved the creation of a different drug-free wing.

8. HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

69. The limitations on the Board's capacity during 2018 have meant that limited attention was paid to healthcare. We are familiar with the contribution made by healthcare staff to the wellbeing of prisoners through attendance at segregation reviews and detailed involvement with the care of those on ACCTs and we have not been made aware of shortfalls in provision, despite pressures on staff. The number of applications we received on this subject reduced.
70. Because of our concerns about access to primary care services in 2017, which was also the subject of comment by HMIP, we have kept up to date with waiting times for GP and dental services.

We have recorded previously our disappointment that the deterioration in routine waiting times for both GP and dental services has not been addressed more quickly. The situation has not changed, with waiting times for both services continuing to fluctuate throughout 2018 despite the periodic provision of additional sessions. Waiting times for the GP peaked at 36 days in July and August, and reduced at the end of the year. Waiting times for dental treatment stood at 29 weeks, with a hope that this would improve in 2019. We appreciate that the factors affecting waiting times in prison differ from those in the community but consider the failure to deliver consistent service to be unacceptable

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

71. The IMB welcomes the more refined approach being developed to the delivery of education, with the aim of engaging prisoners, encouraging ownership of individual portfolios and emphasising quality and outcomes.
72. As a result of wider changes, HMP Northumberland will be one of five north east prisons working as a unit, with a broader academies structure.
73. Within the prison there have been noticeable improvements, including efforts to increase the numbers with qualifications in maths and English. During their induction, residents are also encouraged to make use of the Career Centre, opened in September 2018, to help plan their educational and employment experience to equip them for work and/or education upon release. More support to individuals is provided by peer mentors, for whom a tutor was identified. Key workers are tasked with helping to maintain engagement and they can also be instrumental in securing a switch in courses.
74. In our last report we stressed the need to improve overall attendance and punctuality at education sessions. It is pleasing to record some improvements, mainly as a result of the staff vigilance. In addition, there are now weekly meetings that review dismissals from education, identify problems and develop action plans to help residents re-engage successfully.
75. However late arrivals either from distant house blocks or related to methadone distribution or healthcare appointments remain of some concern.
76. During 2018 an OFSTED visit found that attendance and punctuality showed signs of improvement, but they too recognised the need for continued focus to maintain momentum. That visit also commended the efforts referred to earlier, as well as improvements to the allocation procedure and capturing 'non-qualification' skills to enhance CVs.
77. The IMB supports the continuing encouragement of residents to make use of library services; a substantial increase in the numbers of books borrowed and a significant drop in the overdue rate suggest that more residents are taking an interest.
78. Other notable improvements include the re-establishment of the Storybook Dads scheme and the increased popularity of the Six Book scheme, which rewards residents for reading and reviewing six books.
79. The library now subscribes to "Bright Books" which sources and delivers foreign language books from an approved publications list.
80. The IMB welcomes the significant developments during the year in what the prison offers in terms of physical education. 2018 began with no accredited qualifications on offer and progressed to NVQ2s in fitness instruction and manual handling, plus NVQ3 in first aid. Almost 100 accredited qualifications were gained.
81. There have been considerable efforts to improve participation in physical education, with a reduction of around 25% in the numbers who do not participate. In addition:
 - Specialist sessions have been introduced for over-50s on the mains side, with similar plans for VP residents.
 - The Sports Clinic (remedial PE) is running at full capacity.
 - Fitness suites have been introduced on six house blocks each with an associated weight-loss club.

82. It is encouraging to record that there are plans in place to extend all of the above activities, along with re starting the football team. Gym staff also support family days.

83. Inevitably the change in regime meant a reduction in the number of traditional gym sessions on offer. The IMB has received some complaints from prisoners who previously made extensive use of the gym. As sufficient sessions are available to ensure that most residents can access the gym for almost three hours per week the Board's view is that these arrangements are more equitable and attract greater participation, with better use of the facilities.

84. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

85. An ongoing challenge for the prison is to be able to offer enough jobs for all those men who wish to work and to have a range of jobs available which are relevant to what prisoners might be able to achieve upon release. The prison's location does not make this easy. Despite sustained efforts, for most of the year, 130 prisoners were unemployed (almost 10%). Factors such as turnover in existing industrial contacts diversely affected work levels in the second half of the year, with one workshop closed for several months. Providing meaningful work for those Mains prisoners on the Own Protection wing adds to the difficulties.

86. Efforts have continued this year to increase the number of jobs and expand the range of work available. During the year there have been some notable innovations including opening a prison shop.

Notable successes include:

- The number and variety of ROTL placements has continued to improve, and availability of placements has kept pace with the growing numbers of men who satisfy the criteria.
- Growing interest from potential employers offers hope for expansion in the future.
- The prison shop opened its doors, offering both employment and an outlet for items produced at HMP Northumberland and elsewhere.

87. The academies programme referred to earlier (par. 73) aims to improve alignment between education, work experience and employment opportunities on release and during the year links were beginning to develop with local employers. NVQ qualifications have been aligned with existing workshop contracts including NVQ3s in engineering and bricklaying and possible job opportunities.

88. It is pleasing to report that levels of attendance and punctuality at work have improved during the year. This can be attributed in part to changes in prisoner attitudes to more satisfying opportunities in the workshops; and in part to the introduction of the key worker scheme.

89. Attendance at workshops is running at more than 80%, with almost all exceptions being authorised absence (healthcare, legal visits, etc.). There is scope for improvement in punctuality especially for those prisoners in receipt of methadone, but disruption by regime restrictions has greatly improved in comparison to previous years, and is now very rare.

90. The Board occasionally receives prisoner complaints about the way work is allocated, or about a dismissal. Opportunities for work are well publicised on the kiosk system, the Board judges the allocation process to be both swift and fair, and the establishment has been able to justify any of the dismissals that we have looked into.

91. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

92. As the Board observed in last year's report, changes to the role of HMP Durham meant that prisoners arrive at HMP Northumberland much earlier in their sentence. This could mean that the basic information on which sentences are planned was incomplete. The Board welcomed the measures put in place to address this but we became aware that the numbers of prisoners arriving without a completed OASys began to arise again in November 2018, something we will continue to monitor closely.
93. More rapid transfers from a reception prison mean that the initial categorisation there has to be based primarily on static factors in the ICA8 algorithm. Residents are being moved to HMP Northumberland before there has been an opportunity for the reception prison to take wider (behavioural) factors into account. This has resulted in a number of cases where a prisoner needs to be re-categorised shortly after arrival. Because of the shortage of category B places across the estate the resulting transfers can take time to organise. This can disrupt progression for those residents who are not suited to category C conditions. Of greatest concern, such prisoners are segregated as a result of lack of provision elsewhere in the prison estate. That seems unfair.
94. There has been a phased introduction of the key worker initiative throughout the year, which was completed in November. Consequently, some prisoners have been able to benefit for longer than others and some staff have more experience of the role than others. We have not separately monitored either the quality or frequency of interactions although we have had access to the systematic scrutiny carried out by the Management Team. In addition, anecdotal feedback to members from both prisoners and staff has been broadly positive. Initially the increase in staff/prisoner interaction and the greater continuity in addressing any concerns was welcomed by both also in engagement with work and vocational training. The Board intend to monitor impact of this initiative in the coming year.
95. Two Resettlement days, held in April and October, provided the opportunity for the Board to conduct a written survey of prisoners to gain a picture of their preparation for release. Although the returns were low, similar anxieties to those previously identified, namely accommodation, employment, family relationships and finances, were recorded. The second resettlement day in October included a wide range of agencies who support residents through the gate and were able to respond to their concerns. Those men who are required to present themselves to a local authority on the day of release as having no fixed abode continue to be a concern, even though the numbers may be low. Despite responsive local authorities, we find this to be a scarcely acceptable situation in which someone who may have spent several years in prison is suddenly placed.
96. Throughout the year there appeared to be about 90 category D residents. Whilst some choose to remain in HMP Northumberland, there are currently 30 men who have been convicted of a sexual offence and are waiting for a place in an appropriate establishment. But the total places available are limited, none of them is even close to Northumberland and the turnover is low. The Board thinks action is needed to increase the number of places available for this group of prisoners.
97. The Board received 38 applications relating to all aspects of sentence management this year, an increase on last year (27). Most of them seemed to stem from a misunderstanding of aspects of the system. The Board has no reason to have concerns regarding the administration of sentences and release of residents.

C Work of Board

98. For much of 2018 the Board functioned at less than 50% of its complement and this is reflected in the level of monitoring completed.

99. On a more positive note, during the year six people were recommended for membership. It is good to report that we now have two members under the age of 30.

Statistics 2018

100. Recommended Complement of Board Members 20

Number of Board Members at the start of the reporting period 14

Number of Board Members at the end of the reporting period 11

Total number of visits to the prison 414 (589 in 2017)

- a. Members attended approximately 30% of the Segregation Review Boards conducted each week . The Board also spoke to all the prisoners in CSU once a week.

101. Visits to the prison and direct contact with its residents included the following:

- a. Weekly rotas, namely, observation of R45 reviews, adjudications, speaking to every available prisoner in CSU and an applications panel.
- b. Visits to House Blocks .
- c. Observing meetings on priority areas in line with the monitoring programme.
- a. All visits and discussions with appropriate departments are recorded and shared with other members, and with managers where follow-up is needed. Key issues and concerns are discussed with the Director or his representative at the Board's monthly meetings.
- b. The Board continue to use the hour before their meetings for briefings and training.
- c. The Board's Service Level Agreement with the prison to provide administrative support has again been fulfilled.
- d. Once again I emphasise that this report represents the views and findings of members during 2018. My thanks go to those who have carried the weight of this work

Sue Baines-MacNeill

Chair

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	14
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	414
Total number of segregation reviews attended	109

D Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	14	4
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	4	10
C	Equality	2	6
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	17	15
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	20	13
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	7	17
F	Food and kitchens	11	5
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	38	46
H 1	Property within this establishment	16	39
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	24	17
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	4
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	38	27
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	28	26
K	Transfers	13	38
L	Miscellaneous	9	22
	Total number of applications	244	289