



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

**HMP Pentonville**

**for reporting year**  
**April 2018 - March 2019**

**Published**  
**August 2019**



*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

### **Introductory Sections**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Statutory Role</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Description of HMP Pentonville</b>	<b>7</b>

### **Evidence Sections**

<b>4</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Equality and Fairness</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Segregation Unit</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Accommodation and communication</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Work, Vocational Training and Employment</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Resettlement Preparation</b>	<b>26</b>

	<b>The Work of the IMB</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Applications to the IMB</b>	<b>29</b>

---

## 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.

### ACRONYMS

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (care planning system used to identify and care for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm)
Board	The Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Pentonville
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
DIRF	Discrimination Incident Reporting Form
ESS	Enhanced Support Services (work with the most challenging prisoners who cause high levels of disruption and/or harm to themselves and others)
GFSL	Government Facilities Services Limited (took over from Carillion in January 2018)
Governor	The Governing Governor in overall charge of HMP Pentonville
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection
MDT	Mandatory Drug Tests
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
OMiC	Offender Management in Custody
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OSG	Operational Support Grade officer (wears a uniform but is not a prison officer)
OU	The Open University

PACT	Prison Advice and Care Trust
PMG	Prison Maintenance Group
P-NOMIS	Prison National Offender Management Information System
ROTL	Release on Temporary Licence
SMT	Senior Management team at HMP Pentonville
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner e.g. someone charged or convicted of a sexual offence
VPU	Vulnerable Prisoners Unit
YA	Young adult prisoner (aged between 18 and their 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday)

## **2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

---

From the inadequate staffing levels and curtailed regimes of summer 2018, by March 2019 the prison had been fully staffed for some months. The Board often observes officers - whether experienced or amongst the many new recruits - doing their best for those in their care in conditions which would push many of us to our limit.

4 staff and around 40 prisoners were assaulted each week in March. Drugs remain a huge challenge, illustrated by the number of men who arrive dependent on drugs or alcohol - 231 were identified in a 3 month period, including 52 who needed alcohol detox - and the volume of drugs being trafficked in. Combined with ongoing problems with pests – cockroaches especially – this is not an easy place to live or work in.

The Board continues to have concerns that neither HMPPS nor the MOJ have given Pentonville the care, scrutiny and money that it needs for years, perhaps even decades. The new Governor (in post since August 2018) recognises the challenges ahead and the limitations placed on improving outcomes without significant investment. He commissioned a series of detailed audits in swift succession, including relating to safety, use of force, and the adequacy of GFSL's prison maintenance capabilities. They revealed significant gaps in many areas, including a shortfall of more than 50% of the tradespeople a large Victorian prison such as Pentonville needs to keep on top of maintenance and statutory health and safety compliance.

Pentonville is an essential cog in the local criminal justice system with tens of thousands of movements in and out of the prison every year. And yet the prison also wears the Resettlement badge – tough when the average prisoner stays for only 7 weeks, ROTL opportunities have been non-existent for years and attendance at Education is on average approximately half of what it could be on any given day.

HMIP has recently given its verdict on the state of the prison and outcomes for prisoners. Other London jails have benefited in recent years from the Reform Prison programme or the 10 Prisons Project and had significant capital investment particularly to help with safety and security. The Board hopes this Governor is now given adequate support and money to respond and turn Pentonville around.

### **Main Judgements**

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

- YAs should be in institutions which properly cater to their level of psycho-social maturity and physical needs (eg. more food and exercise). There is currently not nearly enough support for this vulnerable group.

- Sentenced VPs ‘tread water’ as they have no access to relevant offending behaviour courses, limited purposeful activity, and long delays in transfer to more appropriate establishments.
- HMIP commented that equality and diversity work had been unacceptably neglected until the new Governor took up post.

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

- Despite the efforts of prison management to draw attention to the plight of Pentonville and secure adequate funding, persistent overcrowding and the poor physical environment are incompatible with maintaining prisoners’ humanity and dignity. Notwithstanding the surroundings, the Board observes many staff doing their best to treat prisoners humanely.

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

- Pentonville is a designated Resettlement prison. But its primary function of serving the local courts and the associated high turnover of its population means that relatively few prisoners remain long enough for sustained and relevant activity to address complex and multiple needs. In addition, efforts at rehabilitation are inevitably negatively affected by the prison’s decrepit physical condition and overcrowding.

---



---

## **Main Areas for Development**

---



---

### **TO THE MINISTER**

- In light of HMIP's recent findings that Pentonville's levels of violence are too high and there is a need for major capital investment to update and secure the buildings, what support will you guarantee the Governor? (pages 8,9)
- Leaving aside the 2-year pilot project for rough sleepers launched in November, what will be done to improve the system for *all* released prisoners securing accommodation before they leave Pentonville? (pages 26,27)
- It appears there will be no imminent change to the policy of housing vulnerable teenagers in adult male local prisons. Given this fact, and in light of the evidence that this policy is directly linked to high levels of violence within adult prisons, what support can you guarantee the Governor in managing this complex population? (pages 11,12)

### **TO HMPPS**

- Why didn’t HMPPS know (until the 2019 PMG audit) that GFSL had less than 50% of the tradespeople it needed to properly service Pentonville? (pages 18,19)
- Will HMPPS:
  - commit funding to provide more suitable cells for the elderly, bed-bound and disabled prisoners who are in custody at Pentonville, often on high landings with no wheelchair access to exercise yards and fresh air?; or (page 11)
  - improve the inter-prison transfer process for these prisoners? (page 11)
- What will HMPPS do to ensure that men convicted of sexual offences are more quickly transferred to prisons that can provide appropriate courses? (pages 11,26)

### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- With the continued success of Liberty Kitchen, what is the timeline for facilitating ROTL for this and other suitable opportunities? (pages 25,27)
- How will the prison improve the allocations process for Education classes and improve attendance? (pages 23,25,27)
- What is the timeline for refurbishing the Segregation Unit? (page 17)
- How will the prison provide the VPU with better access to education and employment opportunities? (pages 10,15)
- When will all detoxing prisoners be automatically located in the designated wing with additional medical support? (page 22)
- When will the prison provide confidential interview space in Reception for new prisoners? (page 13)

## **Improvements**

---

### **New Governor and reinvigorated SMT appear committed to driving change at Pentonville now staffing numbers are up. Initiatives/improved outcomes include:**

- Prisoners had a more predictable regime for the second half of the reporting year.
  - Local Decision Logs introduced to help staff and management learn from incidents and avoid a blame culture.
  - Prisoners are getting dedicated 'Key Worker' time each week to discuss concerns and get practical matters progressed eg. applying for jobs or education classes.
  - Extra training days for new and experienced staff to refresh and update their 'prisoner facing' skills.
- 
- New addiction and resettlement interventions for prisoners.
  - Staff appraisals reinstated for everyone to help with staff development and performance issues.
- 
- Increased links with employers who run workshops and interview prisoners for jobs before release.
  - More transparency of prison performance ie. more regular sharing of data and progress with staff.
-

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

---

HMP Pentonville on Caledonian Road in the London Borough of Islington is a Category B local prison primarily serving the Magistrates' and Crown Courts in north and east London. The four cell blocks remain much as they were when the prison was opened in 1842; accommodation does not generally meet the standards of humanity, decency or efficiency required of a 21<sup>st</sup> century prison, for example two men are obliged to eat, sleep and go to the toilet in a cell designed for one.

Pentonville holds Category B and C male adults and YAs. Almost half of the adults are on remand. Most of the others are either serving short terms, recently convicted but still awaiting sentence, or sentenced to longer terms and awaiting transfer to other establishments. At the end of the reporting year, approximately 20 Foreign Nationals were held as detainees beyond the end of their sentence at the request of the Home Office. Most of the YAs are on remand and once sentenced they are transferred to other prisons. Their average stay is seven and a half weeks, and few remain for more than twelve months. The high turnover (approximately 100 prisoners per week) has major implications for assessment, education and treatment programmes.

In Pentonville, the Certified Normal Accommodation is 909 prisoners. The Operational Capacity (the maximum number of prisoners it can hold without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) is 1,098. This is temporarily lower than usual because of refurbishment of parts of a large residential wing. At the end of the reporting year there were approximately 1,080 prisoners (of which 103 were YAs).

#### **Providers**

Maintenance: Government Facilities Service Ltd (GFSL)

Education: Novus

Escort contractor: Serco

Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC): Penrose (subcontracted by MTCNovo via the London CRC)

Healthcare and Pharmacy: Care UK

Mental Health: Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust NHS coordinates the work of Care UK primary mental health nurses with its own secondary mental health, inpatient and day care services.

Substance Misuse Programme: Building Futures

Gym qualifications: Active IQ

Housing resettlement: St Mungo's

Gang violence reduction: Catch22

Visitors Centre: Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

## 4 SAFETY

---

### SAFETY

**Safety, security and stability is a major focus for the Governor.** In January an independent report (produced by an external governor as part of Regional Operational Support) evidenced poor Use of Force, Segregation and ACCT practices. Under new leadership, the Safety department is undergoing wholesale restructuring. Despite a dedicated team of officers, the department has been significantly under-resourced compared to other London prisons and has fewer staff than last year. The IMB warmly supports the appointment of a Segregation Custodial Manager and the intention to make other key appointments to the department to better manage the large workload.

### Positives

- All prison staff are trained in suicide prevention techniques and are to be commended for identifying and supporting vulnerable men.
- One apparently self-inflicted death this year (yet to be heard by the Coroner) compared with 3 and 6 deaths respectively for the last two years. This bucks the trend nationally, the latest MOJ figures recording a 31% increase in self-inflicted deaths.
- ACCT numbers have risen from 709 to 742 reflecting a trend seen across the prison estate since the introduction of Key Workers – a scheme carving out regular dedicated time for officers to support prisoners and pick up on issues – and the influx of newly trained officers. Many ACCTs are able to be closed within a day once immediate concerns are addressed.
- Total restructuring of Safety department including new senior officers to have oversight of the Segregation Unit, ACCTs, data collection and analysis.
- New meeting and governance structure separates Safety-related issues to allow for more analysis and discussion of data.
- Deputy Governor initiated weekly open wing meetings in early 2019 to give regular opportunity for prisoners to speak to senior management.
- Additional training days give time for more support and discussion around key safety issues including ACCTs and searching.
- Installation of CCTV on the largest exercise yard and the removal of a broken phone box on another yard which had been used to store weapons.

### Concerns

- One apparently self-inflicted death; inquest yet to be held.

- HMIP recorded that levels of violence had increased by over 50% since the 2017 inspection. A spike in July and August reflected low staffing levels and hot weather, with infrequent exercise and poor in-cell ventilation. Internal Violence Reduction investigations have not routinely taken place this year.
- Reported incidents of self-harm have increased this year from 500 to 598. This probably under represents the incidents as the prison holds a very challenging population, and mirrors an increase in self-harm across the wider prison estate according to MOJ data.
- Improvised weapons are found on an almost daily basis, reflecting knife possession trends on London streets. Mobile phones from the tiniest Zanco brand to a regular sized smart phone are routinely found, smuggled in by prisoners, their visitors or staff.
- CCTV not installed in every communal area in the prison leading to some prisoners feeling unsafe on those landings.
- Staff corruption resulted in several arrests for trafficking contraband. A Victorian era main gate makes it impossible to install a full body scanner; neither is there space for all staff to have a locker to store their belongings. Security conducts random staff searches but has not had nearly enough sniffer or patrol dogs.
- Monthly assaults on staff varied from 6 in April to 24 in February. Pushing, spitting and throwing liquids at staff were regularly reported. Serious assaults, however, reduced. When surveyed, half of prisoners said they were violent because of "issues with staff" (therefore staff training has focussed on asserting authority and dealing with conflict).
- Proximity to secure mental hospitals continues to place extreme pressures on uniformed and medical staff when patients are discharged back to prison.
- The secure fingerprint entry doors to the staff key room have been broken for most of the year owing to subsidence in the main gate. OSGs are paid overtime to be stationed in the key room.
- Following the homicide and double escape in 2016, 800 cells were identified by two separate NOMS investigations as needing either their window and/or their grille replaced. Only 200 grilles and 280 windows had been replaced by the end of March 2019 (although a further 80 window replacements are underway), meaning that contraband can still enter the prison through those waiting to be fixed.
- Spice is regularly smoked through vapes (available for purchase) as an alternative to tobacco (banned since March 2018). Drugs dogs regularly detect Spice impregnated in letters posted in, in which case the original will be photocopied for the prisoner.
- Body Worn Video Cameras have not been routinely worn, or turned on, by many officers despite encouragement from senior managers to use them. The system was out of action for several weeks in spring 2019 when the faulty computer system controlling the cameras had to be posted to Scotland for repair (this impractical contract affects all prisons).

- Mental health staff cannot always attend initial ACCT case reviews. Although a nurse is allocated Monday - Friday for this duty, the reviews are not well coordinated by the prison.
- There is only one Samaritans' telephone handset for the entire prison. It was out of order for the last two months of the reporting year.

### **The 'Vulnerable Prisoners Unit' (VPU)**

#### **The VPU appears to be low priority for Management. Provision could be improved substantially despite the restrictions of Pentonville's physical layout.**

Prisoners are segregated for their own safety in the VPU, usually because they are charged with, or convicted of, a sexual offence. In September, all VPs were moved to lower floor accommodation providing more communal space (and with the aim of improving their safety and quality of regime), but in fact this turned out to be dangerously unsafe. Men (non-VPs) hurled insults and objects down through the netting, sometimes gaining access through the (often unsecured) lift or down the stairs. If VP numbers fell, some cells on their dedicated VPU landing were then allocated to non-VPs. Officers had to be vigilant to keep VPs protected. The increasingly porous landings led to drug trading between VPs and those living above. Consequently, to improve their safety, the VPs were returned to their original, cramped location less than seven months after they left.

#### **Positives**

- Staff relationships were good overall; some officers were particularly supportive.
- Facilities on the larger landings (home for the VPs between September-March) were excellent for education, which was delivered regularly in a classroom, with positive feedback from prisoners.
- Personal care was well delivered when needed.
- Access to the library was initially erratic but improved during the year.

#### **Concerns**

- The upheaval of the move (September - March) might have been avoided with improved planning and foresight.
- The response to the dangerous situation in the new location was too slow.
- Access to healthcare appointments was frequently disrupted for lack of an escort; an officer described healthcare access as "a lottery".
- Classes held in the open on the cramped landings only had space for 8 of 50 men and were often cancelled.
- No access to the monthly Foreign National legal workshops held in the Library.

- Practical difficulties resulted in VPs occasionally being housed outside the protected landing.

#### **Is Pentonville the right place for:**

**OLDER PRISONERS?** A prisoner with significant mobility issues had problematic access to the phone, cell bells and legal visits.

**YOUNGER PRISONERS?** The focus on YAs at Pentonville is to transfer them out as quickly as possible once they are sentenced. There is no bespoke regime/accommodation.

**VULNERABLE PRISONERS?** There are no sex offender treatment programmes, very limited purposeful activity, and long delays in transferring to more appropriate prisons.

#### **Young Adults**

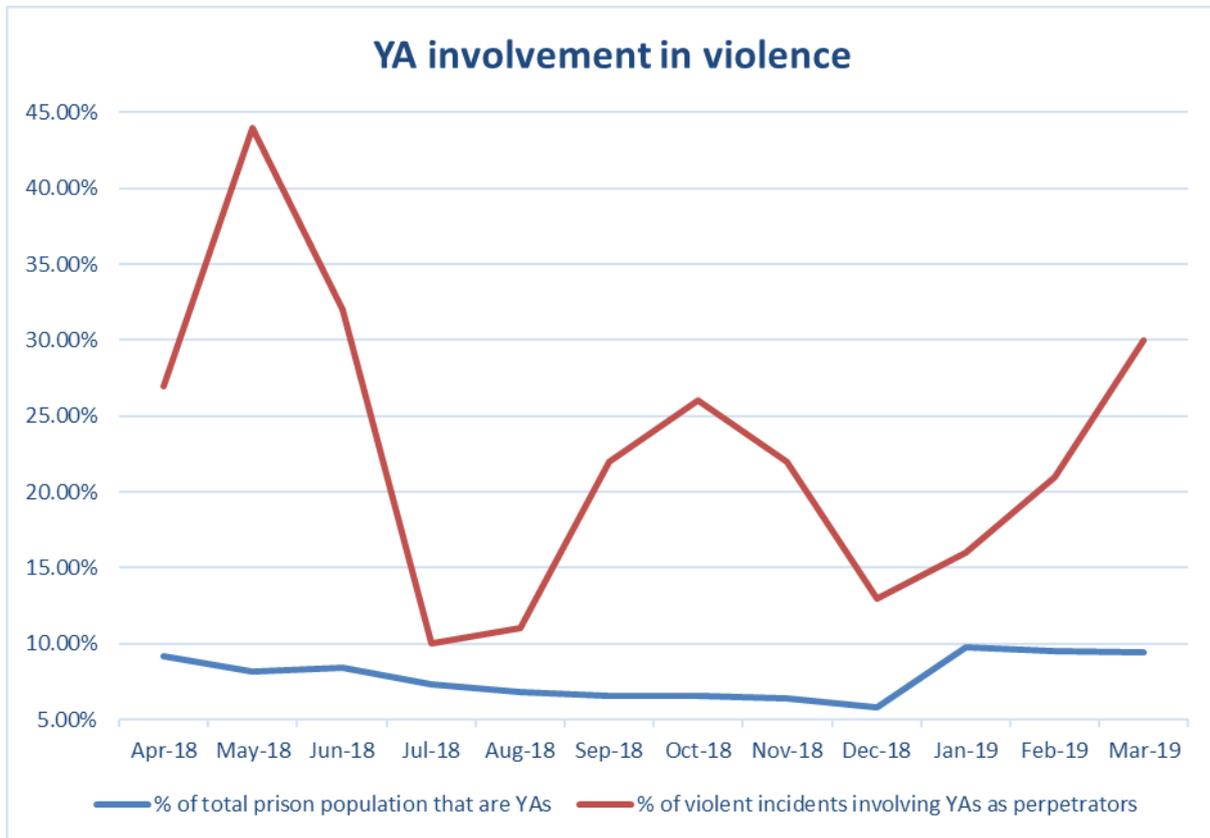
**YAs continue to be poorly served at Pentonville where there is no differentiated regime or coordinated YA strategy: more coherent and targeted pathways for its youngest and most vulnerable are needed.**

#### **Positives**

- The “Through My Eyes” programme helps socially excluded and gang-affiliated young men from Haringey. Partially facilitated by older inmates with experience of gang life, over a hundred young men have attended.
- Catch 22’s Gang Service screened 1,825 men in 2018 and identified 345 as being gang - affiliated. Catch 22 deliver “Rehabilitation Offering Another Direction”. Of the 60 men in 2018 who completed this programme, 18% were YAs. There was a 24% level of improvement in the behaviour of participants following completion by reference to behavioural records monitored on P-NOMIS one month prior and one-month post programme completion.
- A European Social Fund contract helps men under 25 tackle attitude and behaviour issues and find employment on release and the work continues following release. 52 prisoners went through the programme (23 men were under 22) and most were gang-affiliated.
- Personal development, employability, and a Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle course are all available to YAs.

#### **Concerns**

- For half of the reporting year, the number of YAs averaged one hundred or more – but with no extra funding.
- YAs are disproportionately represented in incidents of violence as victims, in self-harm and in the cohort of prisoners placed on an ACCT.
- HMIP noted that levels of violence have increased significantly since their last inspection and are driven by a combination of gang affiliations, more volatile younger prisoners, drugs and debt. YAs are disproportionally involved in violence as perpetrators.



## Reception and First Night (now called Early Days)

In January 2018, a wing was re-designated as the Early Days Wing and for the first time Reception and First Night staff started to operate as a combined team to process and locate prisoners quickly. The aim is for prisoners to spend three days on Early Days with a structured induction process.

### Reception

**The Reception process generally works well, with prisoners being treated with patience and respect, although more privacy for initial interviews should be a priority.**

### Positives

- The triage system at the front desk whereby questions are asked to identify certain risks such as self-harm and substance misuse helps to prioritise those who disclose higher risk factors.
- Improvement in finishing times noted in last year's report have been sustained, with finishing time rarely later than 10pm.
- Quality of personal information arriving with the prisoners has improved.
- There have been recent improvements to the Reception environment with new chairs and noticeboards in the holding rooms.

## Concerns

- There remains little privacy in the interview rooms for the initial officer interviews (leading to less honesty in prisoners' answers and possible risks being missed). This has twice been highlighted by HMIP.
- Prisoners sometimes have a long wait between interviews during the Reception process; lack of coordination between prison and healthcare staff remains an issue.
- Prisoners sometimes arrive at Pentonville before their warrant has been emailed from the court.
- Prisoners must answer many questions at a stressful time. Could the system better prioritise what is asked when, and leave some for the morning?

## Early Days Wing

**The re-designation of a wing as the Early Days Wing is not satisfactorily achieving its intended purpose of giving new prisoners a structured three-day introduction to prison life in a calm environment. The prisoner's first three days is regularly disrupted and the wing is often chaotic, with poor communication.**

## Positives

- There is a defined structure for the prisoner's first three days after arrival (but see below).
- The Induction room is a more pleasant environment than last year, having been repainted.
- Some officers were very supportive of new arrivals on the Wing.

## Concerns

- Prisoners who are not new arrivals were still being located on the Early Days Wing causing difficulties for staff, disrupting Wing stability, and breaking the intended orderly structure of the new prisoners' first days - also reducing space for new arrivals.
- Induction is of varying quality and is sometimes delayed due to staff being occupied with other activities or staff being redeployed from the Wing (particularly unfortunate for those new to prison).
- There is a lack of induction material for non-English speaking prisoners.
- Pre-prepared slides presentation is not always used due to technical or other difficulties. This means not all important information is conveyed, including the existence of the IMB.
- Some prisoners stay on the Early Days Wing for longer than three days (and some for much longer). The regime on the Wing is limited because it is intended that prisoners reside there for only a short time.

## 5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

---

### Visits

**The Visitors Centre is the initial point of contact for visitors and is run by PACT, a charity that provides practical services for prisoners and their families.** Each visitor needs a biometric file (a photo and fingerprints) for their first visit before proceeding to the internal Visits Hall.

### Positives

- PACT staff and volunteers are very helpful, providing useful information and support.
- The (internal) Visits Hall looks bright and inviting, with new furniture.
- The majority of visitors make bookings with relative ease and prisoners receive visits without problem.
- The increase in interactive family days visits organised by PACT.

### Concerns

- The (external) visits facilities are lacking with an acute shortage of lockers or facilities for children. (Although a well-equipped children's play area exists, it lacks heating and PACT supervisory staff and is never used.)
- Visitors take up to an hour to be processed for entry to the internal Visits Hall. Causes of delay include just two processing counters and a single working camera (the other broken for over five months). Difficulties in retrieving visitor biometric data sometimes requires them to be photographed and fingerprinted again.
- Mice and cockroaches in main Visits Hall (including the tea bar) and in the children's play area.
- A large, well-equipped child play area at the back of the internal Visits Hall sits unused (except at weekends) because PACT have not managed to provide supervisory volunteers or staff.
- The toilet facility for visitors and the prisoners' toilet remain in urgent need of repair due to horrible sewage smell.
- Skirmishes and fights in the Visits Hall and the prisoners' holding area have increased - most are gang-related or attempts to avoid being searched.
- An increase in contraband intercepts could be due to more instances of contraband being passed or to a higher detection rate with increased officer numbers.
- Each week a number of prisoners miss visits because of various problems including prisoner names being omitted from the visits' unlock list or prisoners not unlocked.

### CHAPLAINCY

Chaplaincy is staffed by two full-time Christian Chaplains (one CoE and one Roman Catholic), two full-time Muslim chaplains and a team of paid sessional workers and unpaid volunteers. Approximately 530 prisoners are registered as either CoE or RC and nearly 400 as Muslim. Prayer attendance is high with about 150 attending Christian Sunday services and about 190

Muslims attending Friday prayers. About 90 prisoners are registered to other faiths including Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints and Jehovah Witnesses. These are supported by an equally diverse chaplaincy team consisting of around 90 staff and volunteers. Two Humanist chaplains visit weekly to provide non-religious pastoral support.

### **Positives**

- Chaplaincy offers faith-based courses, a victim awareness course (suspended last year but now reinstated) and a new Muslim de-radicalisation course.
- Chaplaincy also provides group therapy sessions (e.g. bereaved prisoners have a counselling service for one-to-one counselling or a Living with Loss group).
- An Official Prison Visitors scheme consists of volunteers visiting prisoners who would benefit from outside social contact (currently 11 volunteers).
- Frequent gang-related fights during prayer gatherings have dropped since lists of attendees have been scrutinized by gang intelligence officers so that rival gangs are prevented from attending the same gathering.

### **Foreign Nationals**

There were around 280 foreign nationals at the reporting year end, with Europeans the most common group. Approximately 20 of these were detained on IS91 - prisoners detained at the end of sentence for deportation. Not all foreign nationals are of interest to the immigration department and the majority are released at the end of their sentence.

### **Positives**

- Home Office immigration workers within the prison communicate directly with prisoners in person or in writing, and provide support and advice from their wing based office.
- Prisoners (except for those in the VPU) have access to outside legal advice in a monthly Foreign Nationals forum.

### **Concerns**

- Immigration caseworkers have a heavy workload and also work in other prisons. Deportation orders are often served with little prior notice, sometimes a day before the foreign national prisoner's release, coming as a shock to the prisoner (evidenced by IMB applications).
- Data collection and analysis has been poor for much of the reporting year.
- Care should be taken in the use of prison staff to interpret for prisoners as this could jeopardise confidentiality and their freedom to discuss matters.
- Foreign nationals' preparation for release is minimal.

### **Equalities**

56 DIRFs were submitted during the reporting year, most of which claimed discrimination based on multiple protected characteristics. Allegations overwhelmingly claim discrimination based on Race or Disability. Throughout the first half of the reporting year the prison's response to general prisoner complaints and allegations from prisoners of discrimination was

slow and frequently inadequate. At the time of writing, investigations into allegations in 11 of the 56 DIRFs have yet to be concluded.

The Governor has taken the lead on Equalities work and a newly constituted committee met for the first time in February 2019 with refreshed terms of reference and a comprehensive action plan. All of the concerns listed above have been openly acknowledged by the Governor and the Equalities Action Plan contains specific measures to address them.

HMIP reported that equality and diversity work had been 'unacceptably' neglected until recently with no equalities meetings or monitoring of equalities data and little consultation with prisoners in most protected groups.

### **Prison Complaints**

Prison complaints increased by approximately 12% to over 3,400 (averaging 285 per month). The major areas of concern were Residential, Property, Finance and Canteen. While these four categories comprise 60% of all complaints, another 25% were classed as "Other" which on closer inspection could have been categorised to provide a more accurate record of information for subsequent improvements actions.

**IMB Applications** went down from 824 in 2018 to 545 (although IMB members also regularly assist with queries which are not formally logged as Applications). The majority of applications concerned sentence management, healthcare, property and allegations of bullying.

## 6 SEGREGATION UNIT

**Neither the accommodation nor the facilities on the Segregation Unit can be described as decent; yet, this is a place that some prisoners refuse to leave because they feel safer there than on normal location.**

The Unit's 11 cells and 3 special accommodation cells are located on the lower ground floor of a wing. The unit is dark and cold in winter and the shower room is squalid. Prisoners do not always get daily access to showers, telephone and exercise. The regime is recorded in the Segregation Unit Daily Log and Segregation History Sheets. Special Accommodation cells were used 13 times in the year and IMB was always kept informed; however, relevant documentation was not always complete.

### Positives

- Atmosphere on the Unit is generally good. Officers show compassion and patience even when challenged by volatile prisoners or a dirty protest. Prisoners rarely complain to the IMB about the treatment they receive from staff (although they do about the conditions).
- Prisoners are regularly visited by governors, Chaplaincy, Education, Library, Healthcare, the IMB and other professionals.
- Experienced governors take turns leading Segregation Reviews with good preparation, patience and fairness. Prisoners are almost always present or visited by the relevant governor in their cell after the review. The reviews are a consultative process including Mental Health, ESS, Probation, Catch 22, Building Futures and Chaplaincy, observed by the IMB.
- Under the new governance regime which took effect in the new year, for the first time Segregation and Monitoring Review (SMARG) and Use of Force meetings are scheduled every month and two months respectively. The IMB welcomes the scrutiny these meetings will provide.

### Concerns

- At any one time some cells were out of service due to electric or plumbing issues. GFSL was often slow to respond and some cells were out of use for weeks. More worryingly, some cells that should have been decommissioned still housed prisoners due to lack of space. (On occasion, the IMB found prisoners in unlit cells.)
- Regrettably, a Progression Regime, whereby prisoners' good behaviour is rewarded with privileges, is usually not implemented on the Unit.
- Prisoners do not always get daily access to showers, telephones and exercise.
- Not every prisoner who wanted a radio was issued with one.
- Special Accommodation forms OT013 should be filled in with more rigour- especially when officers make the decision to exchange the prisoner's clothes for protective clothing for his own safety.
- Of the three SMARG meetings scheduled January-March 2019, not one was held owing to lack of attendees or space.

## 7 ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION

---

**Pentonville remains an unsuitable place for the incarceration of prisoners with most of the accommodation unable to be maintained to the standards expected of a 21<sup>st</sup> century prison.**

GFSL took over from Carillion in January 2018. The Governor (in post from September) requested an audit of GFSL's services based on his concerns about the state of the prison and the backlog of jobs (concerns shared by the IMB). Due to frustration with the time taken to get work done, prison management started driving improvements themselves, where they could.

A governor was tasked with coordinating and driving decency and respect leading to:

- weekly wing inspections to identify issues around conditions in cells, food serveries and showers;
- more cell and communal area repainting by prisoners;
- the appointment of a Cleaning Officer to set standards for wing cleaning work;
- a bi-monthly Respect & Decency Committee.

With reference to a PMG audit carried out in January 2019 on the state of the prison, an MOJ Director of Prisons Estates Transformation stated: *"This [audit findings] requires urgent action....These issues need resolving urgently. As the budget holder for FM [Facilities Management] I am authorising any appropriate spend."*

### Positives

- Refurbishment included: repainting of two wings (by prisoners); commercial refurbishment of part of a wing landing; and repainting of many landings and gates.
- Purchase of two new food service stations for long term contingency use.
- Provision of prisoner notice boards, some new furniture for wings, a new supply of irons and ironing boards, and bins and dustpans and brushes for cells.
- Provision of table football and tennis and board games, and a variety of distraction aids (eg jigsaw puzzles, maths problems, origami) for prisoners with complex and challenging needs.
- Audit fire safety concerns were swiftly addressed by the prison and GFSL to improve the Fire Alarm system; a scheduled Crown Fire Inspection Audit was then able to be cancelled.
- An experienced Health & Safety lead joined in the autumn (supported by a small onsite team). A Service Delivery Manager began (March 2019) to follow through the January 2019 PMG audit.

- A Clean Rehabilitative Enabling Decency (CRED) Manager joined (March 2019) to support the improvement of living and working conditions. A similar appointment was made at HMP Liverpool following its HMIP inspection.
- In-cell telephone work has started on three wings.
- Improved communication with staff and prisoners (sharing performance data, installing new noticeboards, and a new in-cell TV prisoner bulletin (when it was working)).

## Concerns

- An unpredictable regime from April-November with unannounced lockdowns leading to loss of work, education, exercise and association. Frustrated and often angry men locked up for 23 hours a day for several days at a time.
- Dismal failure of GFSL to expedite repairs well, both major and minor.
- PMG audit in January 2019 revealed GFSL compliant with just 6 out of 46 audit baselines and the local delivery team had only 21 out of 45 tradespeople required. Pentonville has limited commercial leverage to employ more tradespeople. Additional backing from HMPPS is needed to improve staffing numbers and GFSL service.
- PMG findings also showed significant risks to prisoners and staff around fire safety equipment and in cell fire protection (subsequently quickly remedied), electrical testing, water hygiene and CCTV maintenance.
- Masses of cockroaches everywhere. The number of Rentokil visits was doubled in January but it has not yet solved the problem.
- Continued infestations of other vermin in many parts of the prison: mice in various areas including some food preparation areas; fleas or pigeon mites in the Industrial Cleaning workshop; and biting flies in one of the showers.
- Rubbish, including food waste, not being cleared quickly but remaining lying about indoors, and cluttering the gullies or festooned on razor wire outside.
- Clinical waste stored in an outside area for weeks.
- Squalid toilets in some parts of the prison and heating failure in some areas for days at a time.
- Hot water to showers on nearly every wing is unreliable; some showers are characterised by peeling paint and mould.
- Phones, on which prisoners depend for communication with solicitors and families, repeatedly out of order (but see positive in-cell work above)
- Failing or obscured lighting in some cells and unreliability of TV channels (for which prisoners pay).

## Kitchen

**The daily budget per prisoner was £2.16 (less than the previous year when it was £2.23).** The kitchen is preparing food for more than a thousand men every day. Some of them tell the IMB that the meals are not adequate.

## Positives

- A food inspection in November 2018 resulted in Islington Council's 4 star hygiene rating being maintained.
- Ramadan meals were managed well with hot food available in thermos boxes. If these could be introduced for use by all prisoners throughout the year, the men could choose when to eat and the service of meals could be streamlined.
- Food quality is acceptable though there have been complaints about lack of hot puddings (see below).
- The kitchen working atmosphere is purposeful and positive.

### Concerns

- Problems continue with equipment break-downs. For example, two of three freezers broke in November, resulting in the loss of 1,000 tubs of ice cream. (Temporary freezers were obtained.) Two Varimixers have been broken for 24 months, meaning no hot puddings, and Bratt pans remained a problem as last year. However, there was some improvement seen toward the end of the year.
- Prisoner kitchen workers complain of little time for after work showers either in kitchen or on wings.
- Occasional prison worker issues with an expected complement of 25 workers but often far fewer (e.g. 18 in April), often due to delays in obtaining security clearance.
- Problems with vermin remain, with mice and cockroaches in main kitchen reported.

### PRISONER VOICE

The Prison Council has been a forum where democratically-elected representatives of the prisoner population brought concerns they identified to governors and others. Research suggests this model benefits both prisoners and prisons, particularly by promoting positive identities and relationships.

#### Positives

- Pentonville's senior managers demonstrated commitment by regularly attending Council meetings this year, keen to see greater prisoner involvement.
- *User Voice*, an agency largely comprising ex-offenders, was contracted to engage and support prisoner representatives; they facilitated successful elections to the Council (May 2018).

#### Concerns

- The Council was a poor conduit for change. While one issue raised by prisoners (canteen losses) was addressed, most were not. In March prisoners expressed their disillusion at this lack of progress.
- Barriers included organisational difficulties, poor communications, and staff turnover at User Voice.
- More deeply-rooted problems included an alleged lack of respect among some officers for the Prison Council role, failing to unlock representatives or facilitate their work.
- In early 2019, senior management subsumed the Council within the new committee

structure, giving it additional responsibilities. The March meeting was essentially a management-led consultation and information-sharing exercise.

- The lack of progress and apparent change of purpose jeopardised the potential benefits of a Prison Council.

## 8 HEALTHCARE

---

**Healthcare delivers a high-grade professional service to a population which presents many challenges, particularly in the areas of mental health and drug misuse; the delivery of medical care is, however, sometimes impeded by lengthy maintenance delays and the prison struggles to manage escorts for appointments.**

Services are commissioned by the NHS from Care UK for Primary Care including optical and dental services, and from Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Mental Health Trust for inpatient and mental health services. There is a 22-bed inpatient unit, a variety of clinics for GP and nurse consultations, and pharmacy facilities on the wings. Psychiatrists, an In-reach team, a Wellbeing Team and a Wellbeing Centre support prisoners with severe and enduring mental health conditions.

### Positives

- The objective to provide a standard of care equivalent to the community by the NHS is achieved and the standard is good. Between April -December 2018, the average waiting time to see a GP was 6 working days (down from 3 weeks) and a nurse, 4 working days.
- Staffing levels are very good.
- There are now daily clinics on two wings in addition to those run in the Healthcare Centre itself.
- To ensure that prisoners released later on Fridays receive their weekend supply of methadone, Pentonville has negotiated with local community drug and alcohol services to remain open until 7pm to prescribe.
- All health referrals are considered at a daily meeting of the Wellbeing team (Primary Care, In Reach Mental Health, the Wellbeing Centre, and Building Futures). This ensures co-ordination of provision and prevents time wastage by misdirected referrals.
- The outstanding Wellbeing Centre (formerly Daycare) has strong leadership and a motivated team. Largely refurbished, the services now include cooking and baking. Users are very enthusiastic about the activities and the staff.
- Investment created nine new posts facilitating further development of the Wellbeing team and more psychological support groups (including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Sleep Hygiene and Anger Management).
- Officer numbers improved, ensuring provision of showers and exercise to prisoners whose behaviour necessitates multiple officers to unlock them.
- Officers show great care when managing very challenging multi-unlock prisoners.

### Concerns

- National policy to return prisoners from secure psychiatric units to the nearest prison means that Pentonville receives a disproportionate number of such prisoners, putting pressure on the prison's mental health services.
- For much of the year, the Wellbeing Centre was serving fewer men than were allocated because prisoners were not being unlocked. In the last quarter however, prisoners were being unlocked more consistently.
- Wellbeing Centre staff continue to report that ACCT documents are not always sent across with prisoners.
- Maintenance failures mean that hospital cells are out of action for weeks. One with a broken hatch (thus unsafe to use) was reported in November 2017 and was still out of use in March 2019.
- No dedicated rooms on the wings for mental health staff to use for assessments means interviews take place in difficult conditions with little privacy.

### **Drug misuse**

Drug testing helps the Governor and managers to understand the prevalence of drugs in Pentonville. MDTs, taken at random, found that 23.2% tested positive (January), 27.2% (February) and 23.3% (March). Drug testing can now pick up new psychoactive substances, including 'Spice'. Misusers are often identified at Reception: 231 men over three months, including 52 on alcohol detox.

Building Futures treatment service is an integral part of the health & wellbeing team and received 481 referrals over three months from departments across the prison, including Security (prisoners with failed MDTs) and from prisoners themselves. Interventions include 1:1, groups on specific drugs and AA and NA meetings. Prisoners were sometimes diverted to other activities so groups running one day a week were frequently cancelled. New four-day packages, including Resettlement and 12 Step Recovery, are running successfully.

### **Positive**

- A through-the-gate worker may accompany an offender to key appointments on release and keeps in touch for up to three months.

### **Concerns**

- Last year the Board said it should be a prison priority to ensure that misusers go to the designated wing where extra medical support is available. The risk to life of alcoholics in first days of detox is acute. However, some men are still scattered across the prison endangering life.

## 9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

---

**This has been a year of progress in education with some good quality teaching and learning and expansion of the curriculum offer. However, unsatisfactory prison systems for attendance and allocation continue to impede further progress.**

The education contract is held by Novus. The Education Manager has developed the curriculum, ensured that tutors are of high quality and further developed quality assurance mechanisms. This has meant a substantial enhancement of the curriculum offer.

### Positive

- The strong and positive leadership of the Education Manager.
- Good teaching and learning over the year with enthusiastic tutors working well to motivate students.
- Monthly celebration of success events where learners are nominated for awards by tutors and gain certificates presented by external speakers.
- Further development with units taught with local universities, e.g. two cohorts completed an accredited unit in criminology alongside Westminster University students with high quality teaching and good engagement of the 'inside' learners.
- Continued development of Open University provision and virtual campus use.
- The tutor of level 3 courses has been nominated for outstanding teaching by the Prisoners' Education Trust.
- Introduction of the Votes for Prisons project (adapted from schools where current topics are debated and voted on).
- Increased links with employers to provide routes for prisoners on release, including a job fair.

### Concerns

- Attendance remains unsatisfactory at around 50%. The low attendance figures are often due to lockdowns and prisoners not being taken to education.
- Prisoners are often allocated to courses which are inappropriate either because of poor skills or interests match, or because their personal profile makes them unsuitable.
- Unacceptably slow progress in obtaining working laptops for university level learners; it took prison managers a year to obtain and adapt laptops required for OU prisoners.
- Provision for VPs has remained unsatisfactory for much of the year (except when they were temporarily relocated and had a separate room for education). The teaching takes place in a public area with limited space - hardly ideal for quality learning - only about 8 of 50 prisoners can attend.

### Library

#### Positive

- Gold Award from The Reading Agency for the Reading Ahead Challenge. (Gold won every year since 2010 when Pentonville first participated.)

- A crime writer did a reading for prisoners in October and a poetry masterclass was held in January. A Vocalise Debate was held in March.
- Promotion of the library since the end of 2018, by booklet and in-cell TV.
- Library attendance improved from last year.
- Family Fables (where men record stories for their children) takes place in the Library.
- The Shannon Trust Reading programme has re-started.
- There is increased use by Education, including an OU criminology course taught there.

### **Concerns**

- The Shannon Trust initiative is not moving as quickly as hoped as mentors and learners are not always unlocked.
- The inadequacy of computers and IT facilities in the Library is failing to prepare prisoners for employment and – even allowing for restrictions on connectivity that security may require- much more could be done.

**This is an area where small improvements have been overshadowed by poor attendance rates. It still presents the prison with significant challenges in preparing prisoners for resettlement into the community.** Pentonville offers its prisoners vocational training including food safety, building industry health & safety qualification, industrial cleaning, painting and decorating, carpentry and barbering. There are textile and recycling workshops and other opportunities for work. The introduction of a more structured curriculum, linking training to a recognised qualification reflecting the work that prisoners have done whilst in prison, should offer them better prospects on release.

### Positive

- With a return to full staffing in late 2018, attendance began to improve in the final weeks of March. The recent improvement is the result of some concerted management attention by both the prison staff and the education provider.
- In contrast to vocational training where attendance rates have been poor, the prison-run industries in Textiles and Recycling have achieved high rates (90%) this year.
- The textiles workshop has changed the product it manufactures from straight-line sewing of prison bed-linens to boxer shorts, introducing increased complexity to the production process. This allows skills development to improve prisoners' future employability (although formal qualifications are not yet introduced).
- The partnership with the Liberty Kitchen street food social enterprise ([www.libertykitchen.org](http://www.libertykitchen.org)) gives a small number of prisoners a structured course in catering, enterprise and life skills. It has gone from strength to strength this year and won the street food category of the 2019 BBC Food and Farming Awards. Ex-prisoners are employed by Liberty Kitchen to sell food to the public on the stall or at events, although the aspiration for prisoners to work outside the prison on ROTL has yet to be realised. So far, 40 prisoners have benefited from the training within Pentonville.
- Prisoners need qualifications in food safety and peer mentoring in order to do certain jobs in the prison. Poor results and failure to complete the courses indicated a mismatch between the (level 2) qualification being offered and the abilities of the cohort being trained. This has been recognised and adjusted to a level 1 qualification.

### Concerns

- Poor attendance rates in Novus-run vocational courses continue from last year (around 50%). Too few prisoners benefit from this important work; poor attendance is partly due to prisoners not being unlocked.
- Pentonville has not provided ROTL for several years. It would improve the resettlement and future employment prospects of suitable low-risk prisoners and ought to be reinstated.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

---

**Pentonville is a designated Resettlement prison but its additional function as a local prison serving the local courts and the high turnover of prisoners makes fully effective resettlement difficult to achieve as the prison does not provide an adequate rehabilitative environment.**

Resettlement services are contracted to Penrose. CRC workers see prisoners on the wings during the final 12 weeks of their sentence to produce a resettlement plan. Assessment, allocation and sentence management are central to addressing behaviour through accredited programmes, education and training, and opportunities to acquire work-related skills.

St Mungo's provides assistance and referral for prisoners who would otherwise be released homeless or need help or advice with their tenancy. From September to February, St Mungo's dealt with 215 cases (averaging 36 cases monthly), a reduction from last year. 70% were released into known accommodation and about one-quarter were referred for an accommodation appointment on release to local authority Homeless Persons Units. These figures suggest that homelessness remains a significant problem in this client group.

No accredited offence or offending-related interventions are offered at Pentonville.

### **Ask the prisoners**

In March 2019, two members of the IMB interviewed 15 prisoners who were within two weeks of release to explore their resettlement needs and whether a resettlement worker had met with them. The majority said that they had had no contact and relatively few of them felt that they had had sufficient help to benefit them on release. While the reported contact seems likely to be skewed by inaccurate recollection (understating the amount of contact), the picture presented of a patchy service drew some support from CRC managers' views that the finding was unsurprising and that the resettlement service provided by CRCs was hit and miss. CRC workers reported that they had had some difficulties in accessing prisoners on the wings. In addition, the team was below complement, the post of manager was vacant (though a replacement was imminent) and the governor responsible for resettlement had been unavailable for some weeks.

### **Positives**

- Lifer forums were introduced in March 2019 for the 55 life and other indeterminate sentenced prisoners (many on recall).
- Although there were initial delays in implementing OMiC, by the end of the reporting year there were 152 key workers (representing approximately 75% of officers) working with 881 prisoners.
- Given their role to support prisoners and thereby contribute to a more robust and effective rehabilitative culture, it is hoped that key workers will be able to mitigate some difficulties in achieving sound resettlement arrangements.
- Through-the-gate work is provided by Building Futures (see Substance Misuse) and by Only Connect, which works with a small caseload of YAs both in custody and shortly after their release to promote their effective resettlement.

### **Concerns**

- 18% of all prisoner applications to the IMB related to the OMU (the overworked and heavily paper-based department responsible for HDC, parole, release dates, re-categorisation and prisoners transfers). Prisoners complained that their written queries were not responded to in a timely manner or that those members of the team responsible for managing their sentence (known as Offender Supervisors) did not keep them informed.
- Strategic oversight of work undertaken in relation to the Reducing Reoffending Pathways was of mixed effectiveness, with some agreed actions remaining unaddressed for several months. Work undertaken in relation to the Pathways had limitations, notably:
- Although thinking and behaviour can be addressed through the Getting it Right programme, this ran for only a very limited time during the year.
- Arrangements for providing debt advice continued to be weak or non-existent.
- While there is evidence of good teaching (in Education) and the prison provides a range of vocational training opportunities, for much of the year attendance rates at education and vocational courses were poor.
- The non-availability of ROTL limits opportunities for prisoners to gain experience of working in the community before release.
- Accommodation for released prisoners remains a problem such that Pentonville was chosen as one of three prisons to take part in a national pilot aimed at helping former rough sleepers to obtain stable accommodation before release.
- Accommodation on release is vital and inadequately provided. The Board does not believe that the local authority units are in practice able to deliver an effective service for prisoners.
- The absence of offence- or offending-related interventions means that offence-based risk-reduction work cannot take place until prisoners are transferred elsewhere.
- The prison has worked diligently on securing appropriate transfers, with some successes, but timely and appropriate transfers remain limited by a lack of suitable places in the prison estate.
- Little progress was made with establishing Resettlement Boards to coordinate input from relevant functions and agencies, e.g. accommodation providers, drug services and healthcare.
- Little is known about how prison plans translate into effective community delivery, a key aspect of effective resettlement. The latest HMIP report does not inspire confidence in what should be a seamless transition 'through the gate'.

## THE WORK OF THE IMB

The Board meets once a month for two hours, and each meeting is preceded by an hour's training or discussion on issues the Board is particularly concerned about. The Governor (or a Deputy) attends every Board meeting for approximately 45 minutes to answer questions from the Board and to address issues raised in the previous month's rota reports.

One member is on rota, and will visit between 3 and five times during that week. The particular areas to be visited each week of the year are set out in a matrix which reflects perceived risk to prisoners. For example, the Segregation Unit is visited every week (and all weekly Segregation Reviews are attended except on the rare occasions when they are dealt with by the relevant governor on paper), whereas the library is visited every six weeks. If a particular concern has been raised with the Board about an area which is not due to be visited that week, it will then be visited as a matter of urgency.

Written applications to the IMB are dealt with by a team of three members between Wednesday and Friday, freeing up the rota member to concentrate their time on the regime and other matters affecting the prison at large (although they do take responsibility for any Confidential Applications addressed to the Chair that week). Many Board members also take additional applications 'on the hoof'. Applications are also sent to the Chair from other IMBs regarding prisoners who have transferred from Pentonville to their establishment, and these largely relate to missing property.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	23
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	19
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	17
Total number of visits to the Establishment	585
Total number of weekly segregation reviews attended (each review dealt with approx. 2-6 prisoners)	49

## APPLICATIONS TO THE IMB

---

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>	<b>Previous reporting year</b>
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	43	26
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	19	42
C	Equality	7	9
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	41	65
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	48	46
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	26	45
F	Food and kitchens	8	12
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	73	114
H 1	Property within this establishment	43	84
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	29	79
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	15	16
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	96	163
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	70	73
K	Transfers	27	50
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	545	824