



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board

at

HMP WHITEMOOR

for reporting year
1 June 2018 to 31 May 2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Sections

Section	Topic	Page
1	Statutory Role	3
2	Executive Summary	4
3	Description of Establishment	7

Evidence Sections

4	Safety	8
5	Equality and Fairness	9
6	Segregation/Care and Separation Unit	10
7	Accommodation (including communication)	12
8	Healthcare (including mental health and social care)	13
9	Education and Other Activities	14
10	Work, Vocational Training and Employment	15
11	Resettlement Preparation	16

	The Work of the IMB	17
	Applications to the IMB	18

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 are specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy themselves as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within the 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 he judges appropriate, of any concern they have.
- (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.

2.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Whitemoor for the period 1 June 2018 to 31 May 2019. IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and of data, informal contact with prison staff, prisoners and their families, prisoner applications, attendance at prison meetings and special studies by IMB members.

The prison continues to be generally well managed and offers prisoners an environment which is calmer and safer than that of many other establishments. The Board has been pleased to note a continuing number of improvements. However, there are some areas where standards have slipped and there remain matters of concern, which are in some cases the result of national policy, and are therefore outwith the control of Whitemoor's management.

2.2 Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

The Board consider that prisoners at Whitemoor are generally treated fairly. Changes to resource levels, segregation improvements and rehabilitative initiatives have all contributed positively. However, there remain some concerns:

- Lost teaching time in education due to officer shortages is unacceptably high at 27% (page 14)
- Actions from the Lammy review are not evident. Verbal feedback from some black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and Muslim prisoners indicates a perception of discrimination (though not borne out by prison research) (page 9)
- Segregated prisoners have differing cell facilities (e.g. no electricity in safer cells often used simply due to over-occupation), leaving some prisoners disadvantaged (page 6)
- Prisoners in smaller units (segregation, close supervision centre (CSC), healthcare, Bridge and reception) and in education continued to be first to suffer from regime restrictions due to staff shortages (pages 12,14)
- Foreign nationals' ability to maintain family contacts is very limited (page 9)

Are prisoners treated humanely?

In general, prisoners are treated humanely, with the following exceptions:

- Wing showers, washing and bathing facilities remain in an unacceptably dilapidated and unhygienic condition, having been on the works schedule since 2016 without significant improvement (page 12)
- The very basic needs of clean clothing and bedding for new arrivals were not properly met for most of the reporting year, though a new process is producing results (page 12)
- Segregated prisoners are kept in solitary confinement (locked up for 23 hours per day with little human contact) for excessive periods (page 10)
- The Board are concerned about the adequacy of Whitemoor's mental health services. Prisoners with severe mental health problems suffer long waits for referral and assessment by mental hospitals, and ensuing very long waits even after acceptance, during which their condition can deteriorate. (page 13)

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

Release from Whitemoor is unusual as many prisoners are at an early stage of a long sentence. The prison continues to offer a range of offender programmes designed to enable prisoners to reduce their risk and so achieve downgrading or a move to a lower category prison. The Board notes that:

- While review panels and boards are generally well managed, we are frequently obliged to register disagreement in segregation review boards because the necessary authorisation has not been received from the Deputy Director of Custody (page 10)
- Work opportunities are generally mundane and tedious: the skilled work offered by the Max Spielman Academy is very welcome, but the academy has capacity for a maximum of only 10 prisoners (page 15)
- The Board considers that the increasing number of young men with very long sentences necessitates a wider range of more challenging and stimulating education and work opportunities (page 15)
- As previously highlighted, there is no specialist programme enabling those convicted of drug dealing to reduce their risk. However, the Board are pleased to note that research is under way to develop such a programme (page 16)

2.3 Main Areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

- a) Will the Minister consider whether the current dispersal system is appropriate, given current objectives for the progression of prisoners, and whether the younger prisoners now being sent to Whitemoor and other high security prisons are appropriate for the more secure and hence restrictive conditions of the estate?
- b) A high proportion of prisoners have mental health problems, some severe. We were assured by the previous Minister in October 2019 that “*NHS England is working with partners in HMPPS and Public Health England to improve and redesign services for people in prison with mental health needs*”. We have seen no evidence of improvement in Whitemoor. Will the Minister take steps to expedite this initiative?

TO HER MAJESTY’S PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE (HMPPS)

- a) A genuinely rehabilitative culture depends in part upon bringing skilled work and stimulating learning opportunities into LTHSE prisons. Men who are fully occupied are much less likely to develop severe mental health problems and to be a danger to themselves and others. This applies particularly to the young men with very long sentences now being admitted to Whitemoor. Will HMPPS:
 - take a lead by incentivising private businesses and the public and charitable sectors to contract with the prison to undertake real jobs of work that will add value to commercial products and/or the community as a whole?
 - task HMPPS to make it a priority to overcome the security issues that a more varied programme of activities will inevitably raise?
- b) The introduction of technologies for detecting new psychoactive substances (NPS) has significantly reduced their flow into the prison. Will HMPPS ensure that similar vigour and funding is applied to stemming the increase in previous generations of drugs such as cannabis and cocaine?
- c) Will HMPPS give priority to developing policy to safeguard the mental health and promote the rehabilitation of young people with very long sentences?

- d) Will HMPPS likewise review the arrangements for holding elderly men in high security prisons, recognising the adaptations that are needed for people of advancing years?
- e) The general fabric of the prison is poor and needs constant maintenance. We welcome the major security overhaul and the replacement of some of the windows in the segregation unit but much work remains. Will HMPPS ensure that a clear timetable for maintenance and refurbishment is drawn up in consultation with the Governor, funded and adhered to?
- f) Will HMPPS explore how new communication technology can be used to enable prisoners whose families are too far away to visit to stay in contact with their nearest relatives and partners, especially young children whose well-being and healthy development could benefit from positive paternal contact.
- g) It has been difficult for Whitemoor management to provide a rehabilitative regime in the close supervision centre for much of the year due to the mix of prisoners. Can HMPPS take steps to consider how the intended purpose of the unit is deliverable?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- h) Will the Governor ensure that a system is put in place in the segregation unit for allocating facilities and resources that are in short supply such as cells with electricity, TVs and radios to eliminate perceived favouritism and discrimination?
- i) Will the Governor take a personal lead in demonstrating the prison's commitment to the promotion of respect and understanding between different religious, ethnic and national groups?
- j) The Board have repeatedly reported our concern about the inadequacy of mental health support. Will the Governor ensure that the contract with the healthcare provider is rigorously monitored to ensure that adequate mental health support is provided?
- k) We have referred to the closure of education classes in our last two reports. Will the governor take the opportunity of a new education supplier introducing the concept of Careers in Custody to review the priority of education and ensure that the closure of classes is no longer regarded as an acceptable way of managing staff shortage?
- l) Body-worn cameras (BWCs) provide excellent video and audio when used, providing evidence that protects both staff and prisoners. Will the Governor consider further encouraging BWC usage?

2.4 Improvements

The Board welcomes the introduction of the offender management in custody (OMiC) strategy and the enthusiasm for it among officers.

We commend the success in recruiting new staff, and we look forward to the benefits from new young officers as they become more proficient and learn from their more experienced colleagues. It is commendable that the main wings have suffered much less from closures and regime restrictions in the reporting year. Nonetheless, staff turnover is high and officers on detached duty exacerbate the problems. We will continue to monitor the occasions when the prison fails to deliver the regime.

We are encouraged to note that prisoners are given responsibility for improving their environment, for example by redecorating the wings and corridors. We would like to see this

concept developed further with prisoners being employed as education mentors and the role of prisoner representatives further enhanced.

We are delighted to see the success of the Timpson's Max Spielman Academy and the Learning Together initiative with Cambridge University. We would like to see such opportunities made available to all the prisoners who could take advantage of them.

We are pleased to see that the chaplaincy continues to be a valued source of support and spiritual sustenance in the lives of many prisoners. We commend the chaplaincy for giving priority to attending more assessment in care, custody and treatment (ACCT) reviews and segregation boards.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

- 3.1 Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Whitemoor lies outside the Cambridgeshire town of March. Opened in 1992 as a maximum security prison for men in categories A and B, it is one of eight high security prisons in England within the Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE). On 31 May 2019 the prison held 453 prisoners, against an operational capacity of 458. A total of 133 were category A, of whom three were High Risk Category A. All Whitemoor prisoners are accommodated in single cells with integral sanitation but separate shared external showers.
- 3.2 The prison comprises the following units:
- Three main residential wings (A, B and C wings)
 - The Fens Unit, accommodating up to 70 prisoners diagnosed with a personality disorder, and undergoing psychological treatment by NHS professionals (D wing)
 - A close supervision centre (CSC) holding up to 10 prisoners, managed under a nationally-coordinated strategy to provide a secure location for the most disruptive, challenging and dangerous prisoners (F wing)
 - A psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit, designed to enable offenders to maintain and build on developments they have previously achieved in prison, holding 19 full PIPE prisoners (out of a capacity of 30), and 11 lodgers (see Para 11.7) at the end of the reporting year. Three men were in assessment for admission at that time.
 - The Bridge Unit, designed to support prisoners progressing out of segregated conditions, opened in April with six prisoners, five in assessment or on the waiting list and a potential capacity of 12.
- 3.3 Healthcare is provided by Northamptonshire NHS Foundation Trust; education and the library by Milton Keynes College (from 1 April 2019), previously by People Plus and Cambridgeshire County Council respectively; and maintenance by Government Facility Services Ltd (which took over contracts previously awarded to Carillion). Cambridgeshire County Council provide adult social care services. Psychological services in the Fens Unit are provided by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4. SAFETY

- 4.1 Whitemoor remains a safe environment by comparison with other prisons – prisoner on prisoner assaults were 51 per 1000 prisoners versus 296 nationally in male prisons; prisoner on staff assaults were closer to the average at 113 per 1000 prisoners (122 nationally). Most safety indicators show some improvement over the previous year, though still at significantly higher levels than in earlier years. Violent incidents overall reduced by 12% from 84 to 74. Prisoner-on-staff assaults reduced by 8% following last year's 200% increase, resulting in seven serious injuries; prisoner-on-prisoner assaults reduced by 21% from 29 to 23; use of force reduced by almost 27%. Self-harm incidents on main residential wings reduced dramatically from 129 to 28. However, the Board was concerned that they almost doubled in the segregation unit (where prisoners should only exceptionally be housed when at risk to themselves), and in the Fens (personality disorder) unit where prisoners are undergoing NHS treatment. Overall, 46 prisoners (10% of the population) self-harmed a total of 261 times.
- 4.2 Some prisoners have reported concerns about safety to IMB members, though the numbers are small and there is little evidence to support such concerns. However, there were four serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults during the reporting year. Most arriving prisoners said they felt safe.
- 4.3 There were two significant incidents of concerted indiscipline during the year, both of which resulted in officers being injured. IMB members directly observed a number of planned and unplanned control and restraint (C&R) incidents and attended reviews of C&R events. Increased use of body-worn cameras by staff in personal protective equipment (PPE) may make it possible to see the activity more clearly, providing reassurance for prisoners and staff.
- 4.4 On one occasion, the entire prison was locked down for an extended period due to staff concerns about safety. The Board was concerned about the impact on prisoner welfare and safety had the action continued, though we were subsequently assured that contingency plans were in place should this have occurred. There remain some issues to be addressed. For example, general alarms in at least one of the workshops are not functioning.
- 4.5 Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) is the process to manage and monitor prisoners at risk of self-harm. In the year under report 148 ACCTs were opened, a reduction from last year's 196. Thirty-seven of these were in segregation. Prisoners on ACCTs should only exceptionally be segregated, and the figure remains too high. As last year, healthcare professionals, and psychologists were frequently absent from ACCT reviews.
- 4.6 The approach of dispersing new arrivals across the three main residential wings rather than on an induction spur remains inconsistently implemented and the overall induction process can take some time. Prisoners continue to complain about the time it takes for reception to process property. A new approach to providing incoming prisoners with basic kit is a positive step and, while in the early stages, appears to be working well.
- 4.7 The frequency of random drug testing and the percentage of recommended suspicion tests completed has improved from the last reporting year. There were 151 drug finds, including 83 which were new psychoactive substances (NPS or Spice), many of which were detected on incoming mail using a Rapiscan "itemiser". A side effect of success in finding NPS has been an increase in the proportion of non-NPS drugs - including cocaine, cannabis and LSD – in the latter part of the reporting year, 60% of finds were non-NPS, up from 40% earlier in the year. Inconsistent availability of passive drug dogs to check visitors has increased the opportunity for drugs to be brought in. Other finds during searches included around 70 mobile phones and 30 weapons of various types. One death in custody remains subject to police investigation and a coroner's inquest. (A second was due to natural causes).

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

- 5.1 Whitemoor's population is very diverse, 46% are from black, Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) communities, down from 61% last year; 77 prisoners are aged over 50 (with 5 over 70); 134 are aged 29 or under; 97 have a disability; one prisoner is transgender; 42% are Muslim, 36% Christian with 18 other religions represented; 21% are foreign nationals. This diversity creates challenges in a budget-restricted environment to ensure that all prisoners are treated equally and fairly. While the Board is pleased to note that this is generally achieved, there remain some concerns.
- 5.2 The Board considers that insufficient attention is paid to the needs of the elderly or those with a disability or sensory impairment. Little has been done to adapt the accommodation to make it suitable for its ageing population and sometimes there is real neglect (see 7.4 for examples).
- 5.3 As stated above, 134 prisoners are aged 29 years or under and of those, five are only 21. There is no national policy guidance for dealing with these young men with very long sentences, whose mental health must be affected by the prospect of spending most of their active lives in prison.
- 5.4 The Board has repeatedly complained that meetings of the equalities action team (EAT) have continued to be somewhat irregular and subject to last-minute changes of date. We continue to strongly believe that meetings would benefit from the regular presence of more senior members of the management team. While there was little change during most of the reporting year, a new rota implemented in May should lead to improvement.
- 5.5 The response to the Lammy review has been barely visible and entirely channelled through the small safer prisons team. Three out of 81 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) were upheld. Prisoner feedback indicates that some BAME and Muslim prisoners feel discriminated against, though draft narrative from Cambridge University's MPQL (Measuring the Quality of Prison Life) survey stated that the prison was "mindful about diversity issues". Improvements in communication could help to address the perception of disadvantage.
- 5.6 The post of equalities and foreign nationals officer has become full-time and administrative support has been increased to 15 hours per week (both from 7 April 2019) resulting in a more varied programme of activities for prisoners such as participation in Black History Month, Travellers' Month, national meal days and charity cricket matches. Better information is being provided to foreign nationals such as a new induction leaflet and a monthly newsletter.
- 5.7 The Board reviewed how foreign national (FN) prisoners were treated in Whitemoor, and found that the issues that most concern them are maintaining contact with their families and the possibility of repatriation. For those with limited English, communication within the prison is also critical.
- 5.8 In April 2019, 16% of foreign nationals had never had a visit by comparison with 10% of all prisoners. Improving family connections is key to rehabilitation. All FN prisoners would benefit strongly from the opportunity for regular conversations with their closest relatives, particularly children, for longer than the publicly-funded five-minute telephone calls per month. Use of video links would enhance the quality of contact.
- 5.9 The prison does too little to address the communication needs of prisoners who arrive without functional English. Action is required to ensure that non-English speakers are properly supported on arrival, and helped to develop English language skills.
- 5.10 Prisoners seeking repatriation are entitled to contact their embassies by telephone. The prison seems to have difficulty arranging this.
- 5.12 The chaplaincy has continued to offer a range of programmes and is a source of much-needed support for many prisoners (and sometimes staff). After our report last year, the chaplaincy has timetabled a chaplain to be available one day a week for ACCT reviews and attendance at segregation review boards has improved significantly.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

SEGREGATION

- 6.1 Many aspects of the segregation unit have been improved during the reporting year, following major concerted indiscipline the previous year. New windows have been installed but much remains to be done to improve the fabric: showers, exercise areas and staff accommodation are all in poor condition. Board members have observed a caring and rehabilitative approach being taken by staff resulting in positive progress for some complex individuals. All prisoners now have care plans, but these are very basic and therefore of limited value. A few men have been provided with some form of activity, including paid work and some limited education. One side of the unit has been opened as the Bridge unit, part of the LTHSE Pathways to Progression initiative (see section 11), housing up to 12 men who are not suited to or refuse normal location.
- 6.2 Implementation of the Bridge unit cannot be fully completed until significant building work is carried out to enable full separation of segregation and the Bridge. Without this a full regime cannot be provided for either segregation or Bridge prisoners.
- 6.3 Safer cells in the unit, designed for prisoners at risk, do not have electricity. High occupancy levels in the unit mean that these cells are routinely used for those who do not require them. These prisoners are then disadvantaged in that they cannot, for example, have a television. There is no process in place for deciding which prisoners are accommodated in which cells leading to a perception by prisoners of discrimination and unfairness. While the Board recognises that this is not deliberate, we do share that perception on occasions.
- 6.4 Throughout the reporting year the segregation unit was once again at or close to full, causing continuous regime restrictions. At the end of the reporting year, of the 20 men segregated, 12 had been there for over 42 days (the point at which authorisation is required by the Deputy Director of Custody (DDC)) and of those two, had been segregated for over 100 days. This is an improvement from earlier in the year, when 16 had been segregated for more than 42 days, three of these for over 300 days. While the Board recognises that many of the prisoners are complex and difficult men, it is well documented that long term segregation causes deteriorating mental health. Men on ACCTs (see section 4) should not normally be kept in segregation. But at one point, nine out of 26 were on ACCTs, and self-harm incidents doubled from last year.
- 6.5 Segregation review boards were well chaired, and attendance by the chaplaincy increased. However, psychology was represented on only three out of 52 boards. Progress for prisoners was frequently limited with no change for many months; agreed actions were often not carried out, or no information on them was available; transfers to other prisons or hospitals were very difficult to arrange with long waits even when agreed; segregated prisoners housed in healthcare due to capacity constraints were not always reviewed. The Board declined to concur with the outcome 56 times (an average of over 1 per review board), most frequently because segregation had exceeded 42 days and was not authorised by the DDC, but also in a number of cases due to insufficient progress on an exit plan. We also escalated concerns about progress for a further 21 prisoners.
- 6.6 To repeat some points from our previous annual report - for most of the year, prisoners had to choose between a daily shower or a phone call. TVs and radios were frequently not available for all entitled to them; men were locked up in excess of 23 hours a day, with limited human contact, supplies of clean clothes and bedding were often limited; few men could take part in corporate worship. Mandela Rule 44 states “...solitary confinement shall refer to the confinement of prisoners for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact.” By this measure, segregated prisoners are in solitary confinement.

- 6.7 Adjudications observed by the Board were handled correctly and fairly. There were occasions when a single incident resulted in multiple adjudications, which seemed confusing, unnecessarily time-consuming and administratively complex.

CLOSE SUPERVISION CENTRE

- 6.8 Whitemoor's F Wing is one of the four main units of the close supervision centre (CSC), a national centrally-managed system that removes up to 66 of the most disruptive, challenging and dangerous prisoners from ordinary locations. During the year, Whitemoor accommodated up to seven men at any one time. Most moves from the unit were to hospital or elsewhere in the CSC but one man was deselected.
- 6.9 The mix of men held in F wing over the year has been such that it was often judged impossible to allow all prisoners to mix freely. Association is a necessary element in preparing prisoners for a return to normal location, a key part of Whitemoor's role. One man was at times held in his cell for long periods, and others occasionally sought to self-isolate. It also became difficult to hold community meetings, either because not all prisoners would participate, or because some would seek to dominate the agenda. Two men generated very high numbers of complaints, as they have in other CSC units.
- 6.10 CSC management both locally and centrally have been alert to these problems. They have sought to relocate prisoners appropriately, but there is limited scope within a fairly small system that by definition contains men with degrees of particular difficulty.
- 6.11 During the year, the wing held two mentally ill men acutely in need of specialist treatment. One was let down by a series of shortcomings in respect of referral on the part of the prison's mental health team.
- 6.12 The accommodation and facilities are similar to those elsewhere in the jail. The open-air recreation area is more generous. Education and work opportunities are few. The visits room is unsatisfactory, especially in terms of aural privacy. Provision for worship is limited. Association spaces are reasonable, but the Board has commented that the central recreation area is too often occupied by officers sitting together chatting. We have noted too that visits by the duty governor are infrequent, and by the Governor or Deputy Governors rare.
- 6.13 In addition to the main CSC units, men may be held short-term in designated cells (DCs) in regular segregation areas. The two DCs at Whitemoor were occupied for most of the year. In practice DC prisoners were treated exactly the same as others in segregation, including in being affected by curtailed regimes due to staff shortages. As the CSC pays for an additional officer to cover DCs, such restrictions are unacceptable.

7. ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

- 7.1 The prison runs an on-going and successful recruitment campaign, but staff turnover is high and sometimes recruitment barely keeps pace with departures. Shortage of staff has caused reception (a key function which deals with arriving and departing prisoners and their property) to be closed or operating with fewer staff than needed for a full regime on 439 occasions (equivalent to about 146 days). Failure to deal with property is a major cause of dissatisfaction among prisoners. The effects on education are described elsewhere (section 9). The impact on the smaller units such as F wing and the segregation unit are severe, but improved from last year. Despite this, our observations suggest that in most cases the relationship between officers and prisoners has remained positive.
- 7.2 Prisoner-maintained gardens on the A-wing PIPE unit and on D wing are impressive and attractive contributing strongly to the rehabilitative culture of these units. It is disappointing that the F wing garden has had very limited use.
- 7.3 Painting of wings (walls, railings and walkways) has happened periodically and evidence from our visits indicates that cleanliness and tidiness has been maintained at last year's reasonable levels. We welcome the increasing number of occasions when prisoners are themselves allowed to do this work. The introduction of new gym equipment and table games has also continued during the year.
- 7.4 The condition of some of the basic facilities on the wings has continued to be well below what the Board considers to be an acceptable standard. Last year we stated 'showers are in a poor decorative condition with peeling paint, rusting pipes, poor drainage, variable water temperature and in some cases broken tiles with jagged edges'. This still applies. A bath for the use of older prisoners has been out of action for over two years: recently it was removed without a replacement being installed. Levels of frustration amongst prisoners over this basic requirement for decency are at an increasingly high level.
- 7.5 Last year we stated 'telephone booths on the wings would benefit from refurbishment with better chairs and a shelf for writing on'. This still applies. We reported last year that significant problems remain with the provision of clothing, especially for new arrivals and prisoners sent to the segregation unit who had to wait excessive times for it to arrive. An investigation by the Board into this indicated that the problem was caused by internal prison administration and processes and not by the failure of supplies from outside. We were pleased to see action taken eventually to streamline the way clothing is issued to new arrivals.
- 7.6 The supply of food to the wings from the central kitchen has been adequate: dietary needs for the diverse prisoner population have been well catered for, but the catering budget remains entirely inadequate despite a recent small increase. We are pleased to note that new catering equipment has resulted in fewer breakdowns. The provision of protective coats and hats for visitors could be further improved. The Board received a number of verbal complaints from prisoners during the year about the quality of food provided. These have not, however, been supported by written complaints or the Board's observation from regularly sampling the food.
- 7.7 A new prisoner induction book and first night passport have been successfully introduced and evidence has shown these have worked well. More should be done to assist the few prisoners who arrive without functional English to settle into the regime.
- 7.8 D wing (the Fens unit, where prisoners with personality disorders are housed) has maintained a high standard of presentation and cleanliness. However, the Board is concerned at the increasing number of empty cells and those remaining occupied by prisoners who have completed the five-year course the Fens unit provides, currently around 20 cells. This is a costly resource, part funded by the NHS, and should be used to its optimum by early relocation of those prisoners who have completed their treatment.

8. HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

- 8.1 Healthcare is provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT). There are pressures on the service provided owing to staff shortages, not least due to difficulties in recruitment which are exacerbated by the time it takes to process the background checks required for a high security prison.
- 8.2 The Board's observations and prisoner feedback indicates that routine healthcare services are delivered effectively. Some improvements have been made during the reporting year such as the introduction of a visiting MRI scanner and the consolidation of healthcare champions.
- 8.3 For much of the year, there has been no evident leadership, with the deputy head of healthcare left to cope with an understaffed unit leading to inconsistent quality of care. Responses to complaints have been too slow. The contractual deadline is 28 days, but until late in the reporting year, this was not achieved. It is encouraging to see that, after a concerted effort by the provider, most are now handled within the specified time. It is to be hoped that the improved standard can be maintained because previous delays have led to frustration and reduced confidence in the service on the part of those prisoners affected. We received multiple complaints about GP services, but we cannot assess prisoners' disagreement with clinical judgements.
- 8.4 We have major concerns about mental health provision. The mental health team has been consistently understaffed and unable to deal effectively with the 25 to 45 mental health referrals per month made by the medical staff.
- 8.5 There are a number of difficult, complex cases where referrals have been made for transfer to secure mental hospitals. The time taken both for assessment, and, once accepted, for relocation remains excessive, leaving the local staff and facilities to cope with men whose challenging needs they are not trained or equipped to meet. We have in the past observed visible deterioration in prisoners waiting for a long time for a transfer.
- 8.6 Waiting times for treatment reported by the service are broadly comparable with those in the general community with longer delays for the optician and podiatry. However, there are many instances where specialist treatment has taken significantly longer. No alternative arrangements were made for routine appointments during a period of three weeks when the dental surgery was being refurbished. Ophthalmology waiting time has been between six and nine months. Whilst improving, the delay is still substantial
- 8.7 Incentive and earned privileges (IEP) levels vary for prisoners depending on their behaviour. A transgression can lead to an IEP warning; multiple warnings are likely to result in a reduction in IEP level, meaning that the prisoner will lose some privileges, for example a television. The introduction of IEP warnings for missed appointments due to prisoner behaviour resulted in some improvement, but missed appointments are still running at about 220 per month. Fifteen percent are due to GP availability and 25% to the prisoner being unavailable for valid operational reasons. The cause of the remaining 60%, over 100 per month, is unclear. Nurse-led clinics form a significant portion of the healthcare provision and these are well attended and valued by the prisoners.
- 8.8 The appointment of healthcare champions on wings has advanced with the objective of securing consistent feedback on the provision of healthcare. However, the monthly meetings are often cancelled with less than 50% of those scheduled occurring.
- 8.9 There was an excellent example of the prison's capacity for care when a patient with terminal cancer was managed and supported in a positive and sensitive manner over many weeks. His appreciation of the way he was looked after was very moving and a tribute to all concerned.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 9.1 Twenty-seven percent of teaching hours each week have been lost again this year owing to the closure of classes because of a shortage of officers to supervise. This is unacceptable in an institution where education should be a key to rehabilitation. Prisoners become cynical about the value of learning and we have received reports that they are sometimes reluctant to enrol in classes because of the frustrating lack of continuity and progress. It is hardly surprising that this, combined with higher levels of pay for work as a cleaner or kitchen orderly, lead many to choose low-level employment rather than learning. The morale of teaching staff is also affected negatively.
- 9.2 Results in the reporting year were slightly lower than the previous year (98%) with a 91% success rate, perhaps partly as a result of the habitual cancellations.
- 9.3 The education contract was awarded to Milton Keynes College from April 2019 and participation in educational activities is now referred to as 'going to college'. The new provider has a focus on building up employability skills and positive attitudes to work. 'Careers in Custody' is a key theme and the prison has been asked to run fewer qualifications in order to focus on broader outcomes. The Board welcomes the fact that prison management can now decide what courses to run.
- 9.4 Traditional courses are now run in the mornings through the college and more project-based academy work takes place in the afternoons, especially in art and music, leading to performances or exhibitions where the results of students' efforts are seen and celebrated. Whitemoor has a positive track record of using this sort of approach, notably through the Learning Together series organised by the University of Cambridge which has been so successful (in excess of 80 prisoners participating so far) that a workshop is being refurbished to accommodate the classes.
- 9.5 The City and Guilds Award in education training (Level 3) has been introduced with the aim of training some prisoners to act as mentors to learners on the wings and also to take on the role of classroom assistant. Discussions are taking place over the incentives for the prisoner-mentors. This will be a hugely positive initiative if it can be got off the ground and the classes can be spared from closure. Unfortunately, by the end of May, only three out of the expected 12 sessions in the first run of the course had been completed, owing to closures, so it is a long way behind its expected finishing date, a further example of staff and students being left frustrated and demoralised.
- 9.6 A new approach to basic skills is being piloted with the LSA basic English language course being taught on an outreach basis, with one-to-one support offered to students once a week. Approximately six learners with low-level English skills are currently being supported. This may start to address the issue raised in paragraph 5.9.
- 9.7 In what seems to be an unintended consequence of the new education contract, the library can no longer borrow books from the local county council's public library system. This is a serious loss as around 1200 books per year were traditionally borrowed through inter-library loans and it is a requirement of PSI 02/2015 that this service should be available to prisoners.

10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

- 10.1 Many of the current work opportunities in the prison are mundane, unfulfilling and do not contribute to a useful future outside the prison. Linen recycling or stripping down last year's left-over poppies and collection boxes for the British Legion are tedious and repetitive and deliver no transferable skills. Exceptions include the Max Spielman Academy (a photo restoration shop) providing a skilled work opportunity for 10 men (six places currently filled and two in training), alongside computer re-modelling which has been in place for some time. More capacity for fulfilling work would benefit the high number of younger prisoners who need to be stimulated and kept occupied.
- 10.2 We are pleased to note that work is under way to raise the profile of the rehabilitation culture, with a more systematic approach to planning and facilitating activities for prisoners. The unemployment/vacancies rate is only 8.8%. and positions are filled very quickly. An industrial projects team is in the process of being created and it is to be hoped that they can secure a better balance between skilled and unskilled work opportunities.
- 10.3 The gym is one of the most popular facilities in the prison used by 69% of prisoners. It has new equipment and a service provider who responds quickly to problems, enabling all the gym equipment to be consistently operational, a welcome improvement from last year. The team is currently 1.5 members of staff short of the six required for optimum operation, so prisoners are on average accessing only about three hours of gym and physical education per week, when they should be getting four. There is a waiting list for the weekend sessions. Physical education courses offering useful qualifications could be run if there were sufficient staff and more suitable exercise spaces.
- 10.4 Competitions are organised across all four residential wings in football, cricket, 5km runs and Superstars and there are team building exercises for D wing. The substance misuse team and psychology have also used the gym for prisoner teambuilding exercises.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

- 11.1 Prisoners are not normally released directly from Whitemoor to the community: resettlement work is primarily focused on completion of offender behaviour programmes, providing education and skills through work.
- 11.2 As last year, securing a transfer to another prison takes many months due to lack of capacity in the receiving prisons. Of the 291 category B prisoners risk-assessed for potential progression out of high security, 18% (53) were transferred to lower category prisons versus 31% of 216 last year. Only 56% of the 25 category A prisoners recommended for downgrade to category B were approved by the central team, little changed from last year's 53% (of 15).
- 11.3 The first phase of the new OMiC strategy has seen the roles of personal officers replaced by key workers. A key worker is given 45 minutes per week per prisoner to focus on either one-to-one support or administrative work relating to the prisoner. The prison is to be congratulated on its preparations which enabled key workers to go live on 1 May.
- 11.4 In future, sentence planning will be managed through a review straight after completion of a target – for example, successfully finishing a specific programme - rather than waiting for a formal yearly board. It is intended that this will streamline progress and planning for the next stage.
- 11.5 There is still no offending behaviour programme for prisoners convicted of drug trafficking offences, leaving such men unable to demonstrate that they are reducing their risk. Research is ongoing to develop such a programme.
- 11.6 A psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit was introduced in 2017. There are currently 19 participants, developing personal relationship and community skills alongside 11 'lodgers', other prisoners of the wing who can opt to participate in some of the PIPE activities. Prisoner feedback and the Board's observations indicate that progress is being made, and a collaborative culture developing, with activities including cooking, gardening, education and team building exercises. One prisoner has been downgraded and moved to a category B establishment.
- 11.7 In April 2019 the Bridge unit was opened to provide an enabling environment for prisoners in long term segregation or healthcare who will not or cannot locate to a wing. While the unit has started well with an increasing number of prisoners from within and outside Whitemoor, it will not be able to function as envisaged until building work is completed to separate it from segregation. The Board is disappointed that this work has not been started, and it is unclear whether it is fully funded.
- 11.8 Family contact was supported and facilitated through family visit days. Special events days have increased from six to 12. Visitors report that they are treated respectfully by officers and appreciate the welcome and support given by Ormiston volunteers in the visitors' centre. Creative thought is making visits welcoming and comfortable for all concerned, particularly children. Gate 2, used by visitors, has been decorated to be more welcoming. Plans made last year to introduce a visits consultation group are still to be implemented.

Section – Work of the Board

1. Board membership has risen with four new members joining us in the course of the year and a further member in the security clearance procedure at the time of writing. We welcome their energy and the insights of fresh eyes. The increase in our numbers will provide the opportunity to review our working practices.
2. We continue to find the IMB National Monitoring Framework a useful guide for our work and our new members are looking forward to taking part in national training programmes.
3. The Board are grateful to prison staff at all levels for their help and cooperation. They have regularly given us the access and the information we have requested, never seeking to impede our work and offering courteous support. We wish our recently departed Number 1 Governor well in his national role and look forward to continuing to work productively with the Acting Governor who took up her role in the final month of our reporting year.
4. There were 11 serious incidents in the reporting year, most of which were attended by the Board. Some had been resolved before a Board member arrived. Of the 11, two were concerted indiscipline, eight incidents at height and one death in custody. (The other death in custody occurred in a hospice).

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of visits to the Establishment	361
Total number of segregation reviews attended	53

C Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	20	18
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	21	39
C	Equality	5	6
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	16	19
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	19	24
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	4	16
F	Food and kitchens	9	4
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	36	35
H 1	Property within this establishment	26	21
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	20	47
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	2	4
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	12	21
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	40	25
K	Transfers	7	17
	Total number of IMB applications	237	296