



# Annual Report

of the

## Independent Monitoring Board At HMP Oakwood

For reporting Year  
1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

Published  
October 2019



*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	10
5	Equality and Fairness	12
6	Segregation/Care and Separation Unit	12
7	Accommodation (including communication)	13
8	Healthcare (including mental health and social care)	15
9	Education and Other Activities	16
10	Work, Vocational Training and Employment	18
11	Resettlement Preparation	19

	The Work of the IMB	20
	Applications to the IMB	21

## **1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB**

---

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

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

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

### MAIN JUDGEMENTS

---

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

The Board is of the opinion that prisoners are treated fairly and, by way of an assessment, those prisoners who need and require a single cell get them. Staff/prisoner relationships are good and the peer-led initiatives add value to this. The promotion of equality is very good with the needs of those with protected characteristics met quite well.

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

The Board is of the opinion that prisoners are treated humanely and safely. There is a good focus on safety and meaningful support from prisoner peer workers. The use of segregation has decreased and time spent by prisoners in segregation has reduced within the reporting period.

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

The Board is of the opinion that prisoners are, in the main, well prepared for release. There has been excellent support in the field of Education with OFSTED judging the provision as outstanding. The curriculum offers a wide range of high quality educational and vocational training that supports potential employment. Initiatives to support family contact are outstanding. However, support appears to be less effective from community-based organisations even in the weeks before release. In the main, pre-release and resettlement support is effective; again well supported by peer-led initiatives.

### MAIN AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS REPORT 2017/8

---

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

There were no matters that the Board wished to bring to the attention of the Minister.

*The Minister sent a letter in September 2018 thanking the Board for the work that it had done, especially as the Board had been running at less than half the recommended complement of members throughout the reporting year.*

#### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

- The transfer of prisoners' private property across the prison estate still remains a concern. We are continuing to see an increase in requests for the payment of compensation for lost items of property from other prisons, which could have been avoided if a better system was in place. HMP Oakwood is not the only prison that sees a problem in this area. It is a national problem that a number of other Boards report on each year. It would be helpful if the Prison Property Framework, promised some time ago, could be issued.

*Response from the Prison Service -*

*Work on producing a new Prisoner Property Framework was delayed so that it could take place alongside a national project to reduce HMPPS annual litigation expenditure. HMPPS hopes to publish the new framework in early 2019.*

*The current Prison Service Instruction Prisoners' Property requires Governors to comply with volumetric control requirement. When any prisoners' property levels exceed the volumetric limit for in possession items, they will continue to be encouraged to send items out or have them disposed of, to avoid the risk of loss and cost to the tax payer for the storage of items. This also assists with the moving of property when prisoners transfer establishment.*

- The Board remain concerned that facilities for visitors and staff waiting for a scheduled bus service at the end of Oaks Drive are extremely limited. There are no covered areas and the site covers three prisons, HMP Brinsford, HMP Featherstone and HMP Oakwood. There is also concern that bus services to the prisons are to be removed by the local bus provider during 2018.

*Although the provision of a bus service is not within the remit of HMP Oakwood (G4S), the establishment is working towards providing a shuttle service from Wolverhampton rail station to the prison's Family Pathway Centre.*

*HMP Oakwood would be willing to support any initiative taken by the two public sector prisons on the Oaks Drive site (HMP Featherstone and HMP & YOI Brinsford) by joining and supporting them in any dialogue with the local authority.*

## **TO THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

- What steps can be taken to improve the current poor practice of the issuing of plastic bin bags or prison-made bags to prisoners on release?

*There was a procurement issue with Branston HMPPS Stores and the availability of the discharge bags. This has now been resolved and all prisoners who are discharged are provided with a black holdall type bag.*

- What steps can be taken to improve the effectiveness and quality of the current CCTV system within the prison?

*A solution to upgrade the current CCTV within the prison has been produced with an expectation improvements to the system will be made in 2019/20.*

- What steps can be taken to ensure that the morning unlock procedures are adhered to and welfare checks are undertaken according to prison instructions? The Board has attended a number of Coroner's Court hearings where this has been raised.

*Welfare Check Process was revised in October 2018 in which all staff were reminded that not all prisoners are unlocked for activities in the morning and afternoon; however, ALL prisoners must be checked. The cell door must be opened; staff need to ensure it is safe to open the cell door by checking through the observation window first; staff must gain a response from the persons held within the cell. Those who are not timetabled to attend activity, the cell will be re-locked. Staff will confirm they have completed the welfare check by signing in the handover book. Audit checks will be conducted during the unlock process by the following:*

*Residential Managers: A record of the checks completed will be documented in the Weekly Matrix Book.*

*Duty Directors: Will document the checks completed on the Duty Director Report.*

*Safer Custody Managers: Will document the checks on a database held on the Safer Custody Drive.*

- What steps can be taken to ensure that all cells have a cell card with a photograph of the prisoner outside for identification purposes?

*The CICS reps have been tasked with ensuring that these are kept up to date, additional screwdrivers have been supplied by the security department in order to facilitate this.*

- What steps can be taken to address the issue of servery workers not wearing the correct protective clothing at all times?

*The servery workers have all been issued with the correct PPE on all house blocks and this does not appear to be such an issue anymore. A stock is kept on each house block in order to replace any missing items.*

- What steps can be taken to ensure that when prisoners attend education courses they are not penalised in monetary terms?

*For Functional Skills prisoners who attend are kept at their old rate of pay so there is no loss of earnings for attending these sessions. All areas of the prison are on different rates of pay, which is reflective of outside working environment.*

- What additional steps can be taken to reduce the number of prisoners being transferred into HMP Oakwood from other prisons without the required reports?  
*A business proposal has been presented to the Controller's team to clear the backlog of OASys. Head of OMU/Deputy Director has contacted PMU regarding inappropriate transfers.*
- What steps can be taken to reduce the number of days over the date of release for prisoners eligible for Home Detention Curfew (HDC)?  
*There are on average 25 – 30 each waiting for Bass and Approved Premises; this is out of our control as they have to attend these as they have not provided suitable move-on addresses to Probation to approve.*

The Board is satisfied that all the main areas for development identified in 2017/18, directed towards the Prison Director and his Senior Management Team (SMT) have been implemented as outlined in the above areas highlighted in blue.

However, the Board is disappointed that no changes can be evidenced as far as the recommendations made to the Prison Service is concerned, in relation to prisoners' property. The Board still receives a substantial number of complaints relating to missing property on transfer. (Reference page 20, Section D Applications Code H).

## **MAIN AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT FROM THE CURRENT REPORT 2018/19**

### **TO THE MINISTER:**

- The Board feels that there should be a national Ministry of Justice directive in relation to the management, accountability and transfer of property across the prison estate. The problem that needs addressing urgently is the transportation of prisoners' property between establishments.  
Present rules state that a prisoner is allowed three bags weighing not more than 15kg each (which is equivalent to two of the regulation volumetric boxes) and one oversized electrical item plus unlimited legal paperwork. There is a lack of suitable storage space on the transporting vehicles to accommodate the current allowance of property transferring with the prisoner, which results in property being sent separately. Frequently property is lost, resulting in distress to prisoners and numerous claims for compensation.

### **TO THE DIRECTOR:**

- Is it possible for the regime to be changed to ensure that prisoners attending visits are still able to collect their medication when they return to their house blocks?
- The Board is concerned that Health Care Managers have withdrawn the services of a nurse previously based in the Care & Separation Unit (CSU). Whilst nurses attend reviews, on occasions they are considerably late and sometimes unprepared in relation to healthcare needs of the prisoner and this means the review is not always as robust as it should be. Can this be reviewed?
- There are continuing problems with prisoners not wearing the correct clothing in the serveries and the cleanliness of equipment. What can be done to ensure consistent compliance with the Director's directives governing the availability and wearing of appropriate clothing?
- With regard to the maintenance of kitchen equipment and the hygiene issues arising from the blockage of the drains, what can the Director do to resolve these issues and raise the health and safety standards accordingly?

- The Board is concerned about the follow up arrangements for recommendations that the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman (PPO) has made over the year in relation to health and referrals to secondary services and those made by consultants in relation to prisoners' healthcare needs. What can be done to implement the recommendations and/or improve good practice in this area?
- The wages paid to prisoners undertaking vocational courses is less than working in Industries. This can make a difference to prisoners when choosing a course, as income can be an issue. Can the current employment band and rates be rationalised, simplified and made clearer for prisoners?
- There appears to be a lack of internal evaluation showing the outcomes and benefits of the training provided by Education. It is the Board's view that the training strategy should include both performance information and outcomes to ensure that the training provided meets the needs of prisoners to enable them to enter the needs of the world of work and can also be evaluated accordingly.
- A number of prisoners on some education courses have in excess of 12 months of their sentence left to serve. Consideration should be given to the timing and allocation of appropriate courses for prisoners to ensure that they are delivered at an appropriate time within their sentence plan. Can the allocation and timing of appropriate courses be reviewed?

#### **Main Areas for the Board to monitor over the coming year from external bodies:**

- Monitoring of the implementation of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection report following the inspection, which took place from 26<sup>th</sup> February –9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.
- The PPO recommendations over the last year have raised issues relating to risk assessments, the opening of cells for welfare checks and monitoring during the night.
- Recommendations made by the Coroner from inquests held throughout the year.

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

---

#### **MAIN ROLE**

HMP Oakwood opened on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012. It is operated by G4S through a contract with Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). It had an operational capacity of 1605 until a revamp commenced in July 2016 and by the end of March 2017 it stood at 2106. HMP Oakwood is one of the largest prisons in the country. All those held are adult male prisoners over the age of 21. Over half are serving sentences in excess of four years and approximately 400 more than 10 years. Approximately 150 men are serving indeterminate sentences or life and about 60% at any one time have been identified as representing a serious risk of harm. Approximately 25% are convicted sex offenders.

The staffing group is diverse and represents a good mix of ethnic backgrounds.

The prison is a modern facility which is well maintained, clean and tidy, enhanced by the flower beds in the general areas and on some house blocks, created and cared for by prisoners.

A Controller, Deputy Controller and Assistant Controller from HMPS are based within the prison and are active in the control and management of the contract between HMPS and G4S.

The prison is a Category C training designated resettlement prison located near to Wolverhampton.

CARE UK – (Healthcare)  
GEOAmeY (transport to and from other prisons)  
DHL (ordering and delivery of canteen items)  
Aramark (catering services)  
Milton Keynes College (education providers) - over the last 18 months the tendering process for the provision of education services has taken place. NOVUS was awarded the new contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.  
Staffordshire Library Services  
Lloyds Pharmacy Services  
Staffordshire County Council (social work and care support)

## **Main Voluntary Organisations**

All Nations Church  
Members of the Chaplaincy Team  
Help and Advice line for offenders' wives, partners and Families (HALOW)  
Kids' Club network  
Story Book Dads (CREATE)  
Shannon Trust  
Barnardo's contract ceased October 2018. This service has now been taken over by HALOW

## **PRISONER LED GROUPS**

**HAS Line** (Health Advisory Service Line) established to improve healthcare delivery.  
**PACE** (Peace and Community Engagement) established to create a safe environment to live and work.  
**CICS** (Communication Information Co-operation and Support) established to improve the decency agenda.  
**YCG** (Your Consultation Group) is a support team that brings clarity and understanding by:

- Offering guidance and interpretation of prison law to residents and staff
- Working with the Criminal Cases Review Commission as a legal advocate
- Reducing frustration, anger and confrontation by eliminating incorrect or misleading information
- Ensuring resident input as a central part of policy review

YCG is supported by the Prison Reform Trust.

**RALPH** (Resettlement Advice Line Peer Helpdesk) provides a helpdesk for advice to prisoners regarding all aspects of resettlement.

**PROJECT UNITE** was established in 2015 to provide knowledge and support to residents by building relationships and reducing complaints.

**FROG PRINCE** is a charitable print service, which was created from a small grant given under the 'Millionaire Maker' programme. To date this has raised over £27,000 for the HELP Appeal.

**ASPIRE** was established in January 2019. The purpose of Aspire is to motivate prisoners in order that they are better prepared to obtain employment on release and to assist in creating a career plan or business plan for those who wish to consider self-employment.

**LIFT** (Leading Individuals Forward Together) established to provide support to prisoners with mental health needs.

**BIG** (The Basic Intervention Group) established to provide support to any prisoners on basic regime.

**SAPPHIRE COMMUNITY FORUM** which has active representation from prisoners and was set up to champion prisoners' causes and ideas, concerns and initiatives.

**The CORDIAL GROUP** was created to reduce isolation within the prison community and support prisoners who have little or no contact with family or friends outside the prison.

**NARCOTICS ANNONYMOUS** has been operating periodically over the last 4 years due to funding constraints. The current funded scheme recommenced in January 2019.

**INSIDERS** began its operation in March 2018 and was set up to improve the experience of all new residents.

**RECOVERY CHAMPIONS** commenced in November 2018 to support prisoners mainly with substance misuse problems.

## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

The prison has the following accommodation units:

- Ash (vulnerable prisoners) currently 661 prisoners housed on 8 wings. The eldest prisoner is 90 years old and the disabilities on the house block range from visual impairment, lung and heart conditions to age-related illnesses. A Uppers is a supported living wing, B Uppers is also a supported living wing but with a minimum age of 50 years. A Lowers is an enhanced wing and D Lowers is a long term /lifers wing. D Uppers is an induction wing.
- Beech (mainstream prisoners) currently 637 prisoners housed on 8 wings. This includes a specialist lifer wing, a family wing and Willow Unit – Willow was established in 2017 to help to meet the needs of a group of prisoners who would benefit from additional support and have shown that they are unable to meet HMP Oakwood's expectations and/or have become disengaged from the regime.
- Cedar (mainstream prisoners) currently 641 prisoners housed on 8 wings. This includes an enhanced wing for the over 40s currently in transition to become a long term/lifers wing and Chestnut Unit – Chestnut is for prisoners who refuse to engage and are placed on the wing where staff can carry out an individual assessment of their needs.
- Douglas (lifera and indeterminate prisoners) currently houses 87 prisoners housed on 2 wings.
- Elm (Drug Recovery Unit) currently houses 80 prisoners housed on 2 wings.
- CSU has 26 standard cells, including two cells providing special accommodation and a constant watch cell.

Cells are equipped with a WC, shower, wash basin and telephone (restricted through a prisoner telephone PIN system), bed and storage.

Healthy Living Wings were available on each of the main house blocks apart from Cedar during the reporting year.

Ash and Beech have their own induction wings. Several cells have been adapted for wheelchair use and for the use of Listeners on each house block.

Each house block has an education block and a hub for medical staff, to reduce mass movements of prisoners.

## **Any Uncommon Features/Good Practices?**

- The extensive range of prisoner led initiatives.
- The willingness and eagerness of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to try different ways of working to improve outcomes for the prisoners.
- The family support offered to the prisoners and their families is outstanding.
- The care that nursing staff gave to two prisoners who were dying and wished to stay at HMP Oakwood was commendable.
- The introduction of Pharmacy Technicians.
- The ongoing use of paramedics based at the prison.

- The Horticultural Department is a credit to the prison. The Oakwood grounds always look exceptional with plants and vegetables growing throughout the year.
- The Joinery Department where the prisoners are producing exceptional pieces of work is a credit to the prison.
- The Resettlement Peer Mentors provide excellent support in a range of areas. They deliver the induction programme and pre-release “Through the Gate “sessions which equips prisoners for future employment. All of the peer mentors complete the Level 3 in Information and Guidance qualification with some progressing onto Level 4 and beyond.

#### 4 SAFETY

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year. However, the following are areas of note:

- There has been a positive audit regarding security. In July 2018 an Operational and System Assurance Group (OSAG) audit took place. The prison achieved a “Green Substantial Rating” which in quarter 4 of 2018 categorised Oakwood as reaching the position of one of the top 5 prisons in the country. In quarter 1 of 2019 Oakwood was upgraded to the Number 1 performing prison in the country.
- There is still a system in place whereby incoming mail is checked and copies of the correspondence are sent to the prisoners with the original being retained in stored property. This is an ongoing requirement to reduce the quantity of drugs entering the prison.
- There has been a review of the issuing of Red Bands for enhanced and trusted prisoners who assist their peers. Green Bands are now also in operation to control more closely the activities of the scheme giving movement over a smaller area in the prison.
- Over the reporting year, there has been an overall drop in the number of both prisoner on prisoner assaults and prisoner on staff assaults. In 2017/18 there were 185 prisoner-on-staff assaults and in 2018/19, there were 106. In 2017/18 there were 430 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and in 2018/19 there were 378.
- There is a requirement for 78 cell searches each month. Oakwood consistently complies with the number of monthly mandatory cell searches.
- The process regarding the issuing of movement slips has been reviewed and a stricter control in connection with movement slips for prisoners moving between various locations has been introduced to enable closer monitoring by staff.
- With regard to Emergency Hospital Escort Procedures and the use of restraints, the PPO has reported on a number of occasions concerning the use of restraints when prisoners are in hospital and the risk assessments that have been undertaken. The Director issued guidelines in February 2019 instructing staff on the procedure to be followed. Closer liaison is now in place between officers on external escort duty and the SMT relating to Person Escort Records (PERS). Regular communications by phone and records in connection with prisoner restraints in particular, are being closely monitored.  
A sample review by the Board has been undertaken of the risk assessment procedures in relation to prisoners being escorted to hospital and subsequent bed watch details. The check covered a sample of the Risk Assessment Form, the Duty Director’s assessment, the PERS, the escort handover procedures, the hospital appointment letter and the 7-day bed watch log. It was found that the information recorded was very specific, informative and comprehensive.
- Clothes parcel policy has been updated and an informal directive has been introduced, whereby three members of the SMT are the only officers to authorise incoming parcels.
- In February 2019 the Security Department commenced covert security testing in order to confirm that systems in place are robust and are a deterrent for possible escapes. These tests will be ongoing throughout the year.

- One of the four dogs situated on site has been successfully trained to detect contraband alcohol.
- Metal detecting gloves are now in use and reduce the time involved in checking prisoners when exiting the workshops.

### **Areas of Good Practice**

- There continue to be ongoing concerns regarding psychoactive substances. To reduce the volume of drugs entering the prison by throw-overs, netting was installed over all exercise yards. This has proved to be successful against drone activity.
- Oakwood's Drug Recovery Unit (Elm) continues to achieve good success rates in helping prisoners become drug free.
- Incoming mail is photocopied and the copy given to prisoners, thus preventing contaminated paper reaching the house blocks.

### **Areas of Concern**

- Risk assessments and the use of restraints for those in hospital have been raised by the PPO on several occasions following deaths in custody. The Board will continue to monitor this practice throughout the next reporting year.

### **Deaths in Custody**

There have been a number of deaths in prison which continues to reflect the ageing population and the number of prisoners now within the prison. The following have occurred during the reporting year:

#### **Prisoner 1 died 21/04/2018**

PPO Report received in March 2019. An inquest is still pending.

#### **Prisoner 2 died 24/05/2018**

PPO report has been received, giving 9 recommendations, of which 7 were related to Healthcare and 2 for the Director, 1 of which related to risk assessments and the use of restraints. An inquest is still pending.

#### **Prisoner 3 died 03/06/2018**

An inquest is still pending.

#### **Prisoner 4 died 18/06/2018**

PPO report has been received, giving 6 recommendations, of which 1 was related to Healthcare, 4 for the Director and 1 for the Controller. An inquest is still pending.

#### **Prisoner 5 died 24/06/2018**

PPO report has been received, giving 1 recommendation which related to Healthcare. An inquest is still pending.

#### **Prisoner 6 died 15/02/2019**

An inquest is still pending.

### **Prisoners whose inquests were held after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 (deaths advised in previous report)**

#### **Prisoner D died 05/06/2017**

Inquest held 24/04/2018 - Death by Natural Causes

### **Prisoner G died 25/11/2017**

Inquest held 01/05/2018 - Death by Natural Causes

### **Prisoner H died 19/12/2017**

Inquest held 22/05/2018 - Death by Natural Causes

The PPO made 2 recommendations, 1 was in relation to risk assessments and 1 was in relation to the use of restraints for prisoners in hospital.

### **Prisoner I died 24/03/2018**

Inquest held 18/09/2018 - Death by Natural Causes

## **5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year. However, during the year there have been a number of prisoner groups set up by the Equalities Team, which include groups covering protected characteristics and veterans and this is to be commended.

## **6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT**

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year. However, the Board makes the following observations:

- The occupancy of the CSU can vary significantly. For example, in October 2018 the CSU housed 88 prisoners whilst in November 2018 there were 39 prisoners. The CSU is a clean and well-maintained unit. The continuity of staff in the CSU is good and this enables staff to develop a professional/supportive relationship with prisoners. Security of the unit is well managed with prisoners generally treated with respect. The Board attends all Reviews in CSU and monitors carefully those prisoners that have a prolonged stay in CSU. The Board is satisfied that all steps are taken to move prisoners from the CSU when this is recommended, as soon as suitable places are available.
- Board members are contacted within 24 hours of new arrivals. All CSU prisoners are visited and spoken to by a Board member on a weekly basis. Daily or more regular visits will be made to speak with vulnerable prisoners whenever necessary.
- A Duty Director visits and speaks with prisoners in CSU on a daily basis.
- A secure exercise and outdoor gym facility are available to prisoners in CSU on a daily basis. Library books and jigsaws are available and there is access available to a kiosk and a telephone for pre-arranged calls.
- Segregation Review Boards (SRBs) are chaired by a senior member of staff and attended by relevant reporting officers, a healthcare professional and a Board member. Those prisoners that refuse to attend the review are not compelled to and, where necessary, the review will take place at the prisoner's cell door.
- Whilst there are some concerns that reviews can sometimes be delayed due to a reporting officer or a healthcare professional either not being available or late, they are usually well managed by the SRB Chair where the understanding of the process by the prisoner, his welfare and exit strategy planning are the key features of the process.
- The Board is concerned that there is no longer a healthcare professional based in the CSU. This means that on occasions the healthcare professional attends the review unprepared, which can be of detriment to the prisoner involved.
- A Pharmacy Technician now issues medication in the CSU.

### **Areas of Good Practice**

---

- The Board commends the good interaction between staff and prisoners that has taken place throughout the year in the CSU.

## **Areas of Concern**

- The Board is concerned that the healthcare professional based on the unit has been withdrawn. Healthcare professionals are now sometimes unprepared when attending reviews in relation to the healthcare needs of the prisoner and this means the review cannot always be as robust as it could be.

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

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year. However, the Board has undertaken a thematic review in relation to property, which included in this area.

- Oakwood has the largest prison population in the UK. In the current reporting year with 852 prisoners transferred in and 511 transferred out. Due to the large numbers coming into the establishment and movements within, there are many situations for property to be misplaced.
- There have always been issues with prisoners' property in Oakwood and these are ongoing. Many items lost may be of relatively small value or of a personal nature but they can still mean a lot to prisoners.
- There is a specific process to be followed for new prisoners, including identification and a detailed search process. This includes a reconciliation of the property received from the previous prison against the property card.
- As part of the admissions process, each prisoner will be seen by a nurse to discuss health matters. Where appropriate, an Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) document will be opened or a prisoner's existing ACCT document will be reviewed.
- The Board received 78 applications during the reporting period relating to property missing during transfer from previous establishments. There is invariably insufficient space on prisoner escorting vehicles to transport the volume of property many prisoners now have. It appears that a substantial amount of property is lost during transfer of excess property or from prisoners moved quickly when cell clearances may not have been undertaken properly.
- The Board received 33 applications during the reporting period concerning property lost in Oakwood. Many issues regarding lost property are resolved before coming to the Board's attention.
- When a prisoner is moved from a double cell under escort to CSU or another house block, the clearance of his possessions is undertaken by two officers who must remove items only listed on the property card. However, if the prisoner is not present at the clearance there are opportunities for discrepancies to occur. The Board will continue to monitor this situation.
- All requests for compensation are dealt with by the Head of Residence. The amount of compensation paid out for missing property within Oakwood for the year ending 31st March 2019 was £3,715. This is approximately £1000 less than the previous year and includes monies paid for property lost in transit from Oakwood to other prisons.

---

**The Board has noted the following additional points in relation to this section of the report:**

- The care of prisoners residing on Ash, where health is a problem and the staff time and dedication to provide the care required, is to be complemented.
- At any one time there are approximately 650 prisoners in Oakwood with a disability.
- At any one time there are approximately 19 prisoners with complex care needs who are managed through multi-agency collaboration.
- A scheme to provide supervised family photographs during visits was introduced in May 2018. This enables prisoners to have photographs taken of their loved ones
- A Cricket Academy, with the support of Warwickshire County Cricket Club players, was set up over a 6-week period during the reporting period.
- A visit to Denmark by staff from the Strengthening Oakwood's Family Ties project (SOFT) has taken place and some initiatives from the visit have already been introduced.
- A Timewise programme has been introduced on Douglas. The programme works alongside other programmes in making prisons safer for the people who live and work in them. The programme centres on rehabilitation and is peer led by trained mentors. To date 20 prisoners have successfully completed this programme.
- Plot to Plate Course is an initiative whereby a member of the BIG team mentors a number of prisoners who grow vegetables and then use them to prepare a meal for their adult family in the Visits kitchen.
- A Residents Induction Book has been produced, which is given to prisoners on the Induction wings.
- A minibus shuttle service has been introduced by an independent provider. This provides 2 shuttle buses and 2 drivers who are prisoners on Release on Temporary License (ROTL). This runs from 7am – 8pm 7 days a week. This is a cost-effective way for prisoners to get to Wolverhampton railway station when released.
- The ongoing recruitment process of staff has been in evidence throughout the reporting year. Whilst this is welcomed, the ongoing training and development of both new and experienced staff may prove to be a challenge going forward.
- The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) Scheme is currently being implemented and will be monitored through the coming reporting year. The second phase of Prison Offender Managers (POM) will be implemented by September 2019. There are up to 50 officers now actively involved in the OMiC process.
- The Elm Drug Recovery Unit (DRU) has continued to make good progress since it was opened in June 2017. Of the 396 prisoners that started the Elm DRU Programme in 2018, 72% completed the programme, with 28% either de-selected or requested to leave. There is an ongoing waiting list for transfer to Elm. The DRU has been proactive throughout the year with a range of initiatives including open days where partner agencies have visited the unit to meet with staff, prisoners and other partners involved in the running of the unit, such as the Elm DRU Mentors, Substance Misuse, Mental Health, Resettlement and OMU, compact based drug testing for unit workers and a proposed money management course for prisoners prior to release.
- There has been an ongoing programme of painting and decorating the house blocks and accommodation areas through the reporting period. This work, undertaken by prisoners, has been delivered to a good standard. The cleaning of the landings in most of the accommodation areas is of a good standard.
- The cleaning of sanitary facilities in the cells continues to be a concern.
- The maintenance of the kitchen equipment remains an ongoing concern, with key items of kitchen equipment frequently out of commission awaiting repairs. This can often take many weeks to achieve. There has been an ongoing problem with the drainage system, affecting the kitchens due to the inappropriate disposal of contraband items, including bedding and clothing.

- With regard to the serveries on the house blocks, there continues to be an issue with the cleaning of equipment due to the lack of availability of strong cleaning products, including items to clean sinks, trolleys, pans etc. A number of the trolleys transporting the hot food from the kitchen to the serveries are often not returned to the kitchens in a clean condition.
- The arrangements for prisoners to manage their own lives, booking visits, activities, appointments etc. through the kiosk system is good. Support is usually available to help those prisoners who might find using the kiosk system a challenge. The in-cell telephones enable easy communication with approved contacts. The visits hall and the hub (Visitors Centre) both have very good facilities, including snacks and a play area for children.
- Prisoner consultation is excellent and widespread and contributes to the general improvements and wellbeing in the prison.

### **Areas of Good Practice**

- The family support offered to the prisoners and their families is outstanding, particularly in relation to initiatives being offered.
- There is a good level of support available to newly arriving prisoners. There are prisoner led initiatives to help prisoners during the initial period of resettlement.

### **Areas of Concern**

- The problem that needs addressing urgently is the transportation of prisoners' property between establishments so that all property can accompany the prisoner to the new prison.
- There have been occasions when new arrivals have either missed their medication within the first 24 hours or their medication prescription has not been transferred with the prisoner. Prisoners should not miss their prescribed medication on transfer to Oakwood.
- Ongoing problems with prisoners not wearing the correct clothing in the serveries and the cleanliness of equipment.
- The maintenance of kitchen equipment.

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

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year but the Board is able to report the following:

The Board has noted the following additional points in relation to this section of the report:

- The budget for the DRU has been increased with subsequent increases in both mental health and substance misuse services. Additional "free use" gym equipment has been introduced. As an aid to prisoners' recovery in the DRU, musical instruments have been made available.
- Tuberculosis (TB) screening has been offered but not all eligible prisoners took up the offer.
- End of life care continues to be provided in close liaison with the local hospice, Compton Care. The Board is of the view that the care provided is excellent.
- Vacancies within healthcare have significantly reduced and proactive recruitment has taken place.
- The introduction of pharmacy technicians has seen an improvement in the management of medication.
- A review of the scheme that HAS introduced to minimise missed appointments has been undertaken and prisoners are now either contacted by way of a reminder on the morning of the appointment, or by direct approach by a member of the HAS team. This has led to a reduction in the number of missed appointments. On average only 7% of appointments have been missed since the introduction of the HAS team.
- The case load for substance misuse workers continues to be high. At any one time 12.5% of the prison population is known to the Substance Misuse Team.

- The Board remains concerned about the length of time prisoners await mental health placements in the CSU. This is an area that the Board will monitor during the next reporting period.
- The Board is pleased that the number of code blue calls has been reducing over the reporting period.
- A new initiative has been introduced on Ash whereby some trusted prisoners have been taught to undertake blood pressure tests.
- The PPO has made a number of recommendations in relation to Healthcare and progress on these will form part of the monitoring in the next reporting period.

### **Areas of Good Practice**

- The care that nursing staff gave to two prisoners who were dying and wished to stay at HMP Oakwood was commendable.
- The introduction of pharmacy technicians.
- The ongoing use of paramedics based at the prison.

### **Areas of Concern**

- The Board is concerned that the PPO has made a number of recommendations over the year in relation to referrals to secondary services, following up recommendations from the secondary health services etc. and will monitor the implementations of these recommendations.
- Nurses are no longer based in the CSU, which has led the service to prisoners not being as robust as previously. On occasion, the quality of input to the Good Order Reviews has been adversely affected as the welfare and related issues are not always known to the nurses in attendance.
- Some prisoners attending visits are unable to collect medication when they return to the houseblocks as they have missed the appointment.

## **9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year but the Board is able to report the following:

- This area was contracted to Milton Keynes College during the reporting year and the service provided received an outstanding report from OFSTED.
- The Board are of the view that the training is well managed by a dedicated team of managers who strive to provide the best opportunities for prisoners.
- It has been noted that the contract for educational provision will now be provided by Novus from the 1 April 2019.

### **The Board has noted the following additional points in relation to this section of the report:**

- The Education Department at Oakwood uses two major sources of information to develop a training strategy. The Labour Market Overview Survey, which is undertaken by the Office for National Statistics every quarter and shows employment trends and is an indicator of areas of skill shortage and direction for reviewing/developing new courses. The second source is information on job vacancies provided by the Job Centres.
- A key element of the strategy is to recruit instructors who are keen, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and able to work within the prison environment. This is proving difficult at present and a recruitment campaign is underway with the aim of finding experienced instructors.

- The practical skills area of training is targeted to provide the skills that are required by businesses and offer the best chance for prisoners of gaining employment on release. The clearest evidence of this is the successful Rail Track course. With the building of HS2 there is a requirement for labour that has a particular set of skills, which is provided by this course. See Section 10 below.
- Each structured learning programme is referred to as a pathway. Each prisoner can undertake more than one programme providing he meets the criteria. There is also a concentration of Maths and English within the programme but each prisoner must be working towards achieving level 2 in both to be eligible to attend. The skills required for each programme are detailed in the pathway document. There are two official methods which prisoners can use to find out details of the available programmes; a printed prospectus is available on request or via the kiosk. The pathway documents direct whether a prisoner can undertake a course or if there is a requirement to undertake additional work prior to commencing the course. In addition, the status of the prisoner is taken into account.

### **Areas of good practice**

- The professional, enthusiastic and motivated approach demonstrated by the instructors.
- The professional way the courses are managed.
- The medium-term vision outlined to obtain key employers for each pathway.
- The availability of mentors in each of the training groups.
- The labour market and Job Centre information being used to help to define the training that is required.
- The use of Learning Progress Records and the encouragement the prisoners receive to set their own targets and goals.
- Each programme, which is successfully achieved, attracts a nationally recognised qualification from one of the awarding bodies.

### **Areas of concern**

- The wages paid to prisoners undertaking vocational courses is less than working in Industries but reflects the range and scale of pay offered in outside employment. However, this can make a difference to prisoners when choosing a course, as income can be an issue. However, it does enable prisoners to receive qualifications that will help them to gain better employment in the future.
- There is shortage of feedback showing the outcomes of the training. In the view of the Board, this restricts the development of the training and identification of those areas that are less successful than others.
- A number of prisoners on the courses have in excess of 12 months of their sentence left to serve. However, officers try to keep this to a minimum. Whilst it is recognised that some qualifications are gained to support and develop the prisoner whilst in custody, the relevance of attending a course too soon, which could lead to employment, may penalise the prisoner. This may preclude prisoners who will be discharged earlier from taking relevant courses before they are discharged.

Overall the Board is of the view that Milton Keynes College has performed very well and delivered the courses to a high standard, although there appears to be little evidence-based information to support the continued expenditure levels or expanding the training budget or activity. It is anticipated that the current level of educational provision will be continued by Novus during the next reporting period.

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year but the Board is able to report the following:

- In the reporting year 2018/19, 91% of the prison population was in purposeful activity. This is a slight increase from the previous reporting year when 89% was achieved. Those that are not in purposeful activity are either retired, medically retired, unfit for work, under threat, awaiting suitable activity (mental health) or temporarily dismissed from activity.
- All the workshops within Oakwood are modern clean and well equipped.
- The workshop campus is divided into three areas, Skills A (led by Education), B and C. Skills A enable prisoners to partake in vocational skills including carpentry, painting and decorating, bricklaying and woodworking. On completion of the painting and decorating course it is possible to attain the required “tickets” to enable a released prisoner to work on any site. The remaining units are used for assembly work.
- It is understood that only 45% of the courses are completed by prisoners in the latter part of their sentences.
- Skills B is for Vulnerable Prisoners (VPs) who are employed in assembly work.
- Skills C is a large building where prisoners work in a variety of jobs. Originally the majority of the work was recycling but now it appears that constructive work continues to grow. There is a forklift driver training course which is very successful and always has a waiting list. Other activities include fence panel construction.
- Due to the number of mainly younger prisoners having difficulty adapting to a working environment, a new workshop has been created to address this problem, as part of the Violence Reduction Programme. This is a work/classroom environment and is for prisoners under 30 years of age with 30 to 40 in the group. The scheme has been in place for 3 months and initial results are promising.
- Until recently there was a popular course operated by Hawk Construction for prisoners to gain skills in the operation of plant machinery and gain an appropriate qualification to find work operating such machinery on release. Unfortunately, when the contract came for renewal the price demanded by Hawk was prohibitive so the contract was not renewed. Hawk has now ceased to trade. The site is unused at present.
- Railtrack operates within Oakwood providing training in all aspects of track laying with good employment prospects on release. Prisoners attend this course in the last 3 to 6 months of their sentence.
- The kitchens provide employment and prisoners are able to gain NVQ 1 & 2 qualifications in food preparation and hygiene. There is also a course and qualification for training to become a barista.
- Skills certificates are attainable for waste management.
- There is a small landscaping team, which is mainly run by prisoners. The flowerbeds around the prison are created and maintained by prisoners and display the wonderful horticultural skills in Oakwood, which are obtained with limited resources and are outstanding.
- Work is also available on the houseblocks. This can include wing cleaning, laundry duties and servery work. On Ash wing work is available for retired prisoners who wish to continue working; this being light assembly tasks. Work is also available to prisoners on the DRU.
- The wages paid vary according to the occupation.

### **Areas of Good Practice**

- The Landscaping Team are a credit to the prison, as the Oakwood grounds always looks exceptional with plants and vegetables growing throughout the year.
- The Joinery Department is a credit to all concerned and the prisoners are producing exceptional pieces of work.

## Areas of Concern

- The discrepancy paid in relation to wages paid for Education, assembly line activities and manual production of items is of concern to the Board and the Board questions whether some of the work prepares prisoners for release.

## 11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

---

This has not been an area where the Board has undertaken a thematic review this year but the Board is able to report the following:

- Since December 2017 all prisoners entering HMP Oakwood are allocated to a Resettlement Case Worker. This ensures continuity throughout their stay at Oakwood.
- The resettlement team deliver a number of different interventions to address practical issues such as employment, housing, finance and debt, substance misuse and health. The team also offers motivational interventions to promote positivity, engagement and overcoming barriers.
- The resettlement team has increased the number of caseworkers to provide a more comprehensive service based on individual needs of the service users. The Board has received 60 applications in relation to sentence management (Code I). These have been monitored carefully and is noted that the majority are in relation to re-categorisation (15 is the largest number). The Board is satisfied that there is nothing to suggest that the service is not being managed appropriately.
- 12 weeks prior to release all prisoners have a 1-1 interview with their resettlement caseworker to identify their needs and to formulate a resettlement plan, which is entered onto Offender Management Unit, Offenders Assessment System (OASyS) and communicated to their Community Offender Manager.
- The Resettlement Peer Mentors continue to provide excellent support to their peers, providing assistance with low level debt, opening bank accounts and assisting with applications for identification documentation. They also deliver the induction programme and pre-release “Through the Gate “sessions. All of the peer mentors complete Level 3 in Information and Guidance qualification with some progressing onto Level 4 and beyond.
- Case workers continue to source settled accommodation for prisoners who report as homeless on release and they are yet to fail to meet a target of 90% of releases into settled accommodation. 97% of all prisoners released from HMP Oakwood have suitable accommodation to go to on the day of release.
- There are specialist housing and welfare officers and debt advisors who assist with more complex issues such as bankruptcy, repossession of homes and housing law.
- Resettlement work closely with partner agencies such as the Police, St. Giles Trust, Job Centre plus etc.

## Areas of Good Practice

- The Resettlement Peer Mentors provide excellent support in a range of areas. They deliver the induction programme and pre-release “Through the Gate “sessions, which equips them for future employment. All of the peer mentors complete the Level 3 in Information and Guidance qualification with some progressing onto Level 4 and beyond.

## Areas of Concern

- There are times when prisoners have to wait until shortly before their release date before knowing the accommodation that has been arranged for them, particularly due to the nature of their offence.

### **Section C – Work of Board**

---

During the year the Board has undertaken the following work:

- A review of how members are processing applications has been undertaken and guidance provided.
- An Annual Team Performance Review (ATPR) meeting has recently taken place and an action plan produced.
- The Board members have attended a number of adjudications and remain concerned about the numbers that fail owing to the reporting officer not attending and with external reviews, the number where incorrect information or none at is provided to the external adjudicator. This is an area that the Board will monitor during the coming reporting period but it should be noted that adjudications take place at various locations throughout the prison.
- The Board members have undertaken General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) training.
- 5 probationary members have completed their training and have become full members of the Board.
- A further 5 remain in training at the present time following a successful recruitment drive.
- Board members have been allocated areas of special interest.

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13 (6 probationary)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	16
Total number of visits to the Establishment	697
Total number of segregation reviews attended	68

The Board has made 419 rota visits during the reporting year, which includes the attendance at Board meetings.

The Board has undertaken all statutory visits to the CSU, throughout the reporting year. In addition, the Board has undertaken some weekend and evening visits. The outcome of the visits is included

in the weekly rota report, which is sent to the Director and the Controller for their information and any follow-up that may be required.

## Section D - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	20	9
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	15	13
C	Equality	12	6
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	13	13
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	16	15
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	16	20
F	Food and kitchens	13	12
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	72	77
H 1	Property within this establishment	33	44
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	78	62
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	4	11
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	60	59
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	45	69
K	Transfers	17	19
L	Miscellaneous	74	73
M	Returned applications (part year)	0	7
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	488	509