



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Wealstun

for reporting year
1 June 2018 to 31 May 2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

2. Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the IMB at HMP Wealstun for the period 1 June 2018 – 31 May 2019. IMB evidence comes from observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

The Board considers that this has been an extremely difficult year for the prison, which has been impacted by a significant level of violence and self-harm. It has been a year of three parts: June to August 2018 (ie prior to the 10 Prisons Project); August 2018 to March 2019 (with the introduction of the 10 Prisons Project but prior to any significant material support becoming available); and post-March 2019 (when additional support eventually became available). Before March 2019, the lack of staffing mentioned in the annual report for 2017–2018 did not improve and, at times, was significantly worse. For most of the reporting period restricted regimes were the norm, especially at weekends, when prisoners were locked up for more than 24 hours. The volume of drugs entering the prison continued to fluctuate throughout the year, with the staff working tirelessly to try to reduce the flow. The positive mandatory drug testing (MDT) rate decreased by 50% in 2018 – 2019 to an impressive 20.9% which is a credit to the establishment.

Despite the governor regularly raising issues about a lack of staff, for months the Board saw no evidence of any outside assistance or support prior to March 2019. The prison group director had also raised his concerns with the head of HR operations but, unfortunately, Wealstun's requirements were not met.

Although HMP Wealstun is part of the 10 Prisons Project, where £10m was allocated across 10 prisons to reduce violence and raise standards, the Board considers that the significant improvements indicated by the then prisons minister Rory Stewart in February 2019 were not yet apparent at Wealstun. The Board consequently wrote to Mr Stewart on 28 February 2019 outlining its concerns, which resulted in significant changes within a few days to senior staffing, including a new deputy governor and head of reducing reoffending, a new temporary head of drug strategy to cover a long term sickness and additional temporary officer resources and support. The Board is concerned that despite the rhetoric from the Ministry of Justice, it required a letter from the IMB to the minister before the necessary support was actually provided to ensure a better focus on making improvements within the establishment.

Of further concern to the IMB are the frequent internal changes of role for senior staff, which hamper continuity of management. It seems that no sooner is a manager appointed to a role than they are moved on again. The Board feels that this can only reduce opportunities to positively influence the running of the prison, particularly as new staff need consistent leadership. This continual changing of senior staff has also meant that answers to queries from the Board, for example, have not always been forthcoming – possibly as the senior management team (SMT) is always having to be reactive.

The shortage of prison officers has made the management of the prison very difficult, especially when the majority of wing staff have less than two years' experience. It takes time to build up the skills required to work in the challenging environment of a prison. Although new staff have now been approved and are starting to arrive, it will take some time for them to become fully effective.

During the 12-month reporting period, 1539 prisoners were discharged, released or transferred out. A corresponding number of prisoners were transferred in. This considerable churn in the prisoner population (nearly 200%) puts particular pressure on the depleted staff in reception, the induction unit and offender management unit (OMU).

The Board considers that the lack of support, staffing shortfalls and frequent changes in leadership roles during the reporting period resulted in the prison struggling to achieve

satisfactory standards at times. Management was not always able to provide the standards of care that either they or the Board would have wished.

Main judgements

The Board considers that prisoners are treated reasonably fairly. However, owing to the shortage of resources, the disability equality action team (DEAT) is still not resourced correctly to undertake its work and to allow the Board to monitor disability equality satisfactorily (this was also noted in last year's Board report).

On the evidence available to the Board, prison staff do not always ensure that prisoners are treated humanely and decently. Matters improved slightly after March 2019 with the drafting in of some new senior staff and the secondment of prison officers from other prisons, but the overall lack of staff and lack of experience, especially at prison officer level, meant that regimes were seriously curtailed throughout most of the year, resulting in prisoners being locked up for over 24 hours at weekends on a rotational basis. Other impacts on prisoners, included delays in starting visits, lack of officers to escort prisoners to healthcare appointments, and delays in processing of property. This led to issues of high rates of violence against staff and prisoners and self-harm incidents, all compounded by the continuing high volume of drugs and illicitly brewed alcohol available.

Preparation for release is good in part, with prisoners being contacted by St Giles Trust (which provides resettlement services) in time. However, 13% of prisoners were discharged without accommodation. The lack of staffing throughout the year has resulted in a continuing delay in introducing the offender management in custody (OMIC) key worker programme. It is hoped that this should be fully embedded by late 2019, but its delay is a concern to the Board.

Main areas for development

To the Minister

Give consideration to an increase in the discharge grant to prisoners. (Page 21, paragraph 11.8.)

To work with ministerial colleagues to ensure that prisoners are not discharged without accommodation. (Page 21, paragraph 11.6.)

To the Prison Service

Continue to provide appropriate support to resolve the current problems, especially more stability at governor level, additional resources whilst officers are in training and gaining experience and more support for the prison's recruitment efforts to address the current rates of attrition (four officers are leaving each month) which are in excess of plans and forecast.

Ensure that funding is available to resource the equality team is correctly so that the process allows the IMB to monitor satisfactorily (reported 2017 – 2018). (Page 11, paragraph 5.9.)

To the governor

To provide greater stability at governor, custodial manager (CM) and senior officer (SO) level and ensure proper handovers take place.

Ensure that functions such as safer custody and segregation are properly resourced with experienced staff. (Pages 8 and 13, sections 4 and 6.)

Continue to press for funding for a managing chaplain. (Page 11, paragraph 5.6.)

Ensure that the IMB is notified, as specified in the Prison Service orders, of prisoners removed to segregation, use of force, special accommodation etc, as requested by the Board (reported 2017 – 18). (Page 13, paragraph 6.5.)

Ensure that the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy is implemented consistently across the prison and that basic IEP prisoners receive their entitlements. (Page 11, paragraph 5.11.)

Ensure that all prisoners receive their entitlement to library facilities. (Page 19, paragraph 9.10.)

Ensure that workshops are kept open and properly staffed throughout the year. (Page 20, paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2.)

Ensure efforts are made to forge durable links with employers and find work placements and vocational training for all prisoners upon release. (Page 20, paragraph 10.7.)

Improvements

It is disappointing to note that most of the issues highlighted in last year's report have still not been successfully addressed. It is hoped that the changes to staffing and additional support from March 2019 will continue to see improvements being made across the establishment.

3. Description of establishment

3.1 HMP Wealstun is a category C adult training and resettlement prison for men, situated in a semi-rural area near Wetherby in West Yorkshire. It has certified normal accommodation (CNA) of 810 and an operational capacity (OC) of 833.

3.2 On 1 April 1995, HM Prisons Thorp Arch and Rudgate amalgamated to form HMP Wealstun. This created a category C (closed) side and category D (open) side within one establishment. In 2008, the open prison closed and the prison underwent a conversion to an entirely category C prison, which was fully operational in May 2010. Since May 2015, it has served as a resettlement function for the West Yorkshire area.

3.3 There are 10 residential units and a segregation unit (SEG). A and B wings are the original 1960s remand centre buildings; A wing includes a residential support unit for self-isolators; C wing is a pre-fabricated single-cell accommodation unit; D wing accommodates the majority of prisoners on the integrated drug treatment system programme; E, F, G, H, I and J wings were converted from open category D accommodation to closed category C accommodation; half of D wing is the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) unit; I wing holds some of the older population and is the first night and induction wing; and H wing is mainly for prison kitchen workers.

3.4 The site also comprises a kitchen, visitors' centre, chaplaincy, gym, library, healthcare centre and a number of workshops. A reception area for prisoners' visitors is located outside the main gate.

3.5 The prison is part of the public sector, and although HM Prison and Probation Service is responsible for the operation of the establishment, the main service providers are:

- NOVUS, for Learning and Skills
- Care UK, for the provision of healthcare/mental health
- GEOAmey, for escort provision
- Amey, for provision of facilities management and site maintenance
- St Giles Trust, for resettlement services
- Jigsaw, for family intervention services

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4. Safety

4.1 The prisoner population at HMP Wealstun contains a high proportion of vulnerable individuals, many of whom have experienced negative life events, including drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems, family background and relationship problems, social disadvantage or isolation and previous sexual or physical abuse. There are currently six Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners), and the Samaritans attend the prison on a regular basis.

4.2 Disappointingly, the Board has seen the level of violence, bullying and self-harm remain high throughout the year, despite a considerable amount of work by staff to reduce it. The volume of drugs has not reduced significantly across the year despite additional funding secured from the 10 Prisons Project to improve the situation. The problems have been compounded by a lack of officers throughout the year. The positive MDT rate declined by 50% in 2018 – 2019 to 20.9%, which is an indicator that drug use is possibly reducing.

4.3 Funding from the 10 Prisons Project was used for: additional netting; additional cell, visitor and boundary searches; a body scanner which was installed in May 2019; setting up the ISFL unit; and the installation of toilet traps and indestructible furniture in a number of cells. However, the majority of these improvements were only introduced late in the reporting year and, despite other existing initiatives, including photocopying of all mail, the volume of drugs did not decrease and the number of code blues (incidents requiring the emergency services) remained high for the majority of the year. At one point during the year, Wealstun had the highest MDT failures for any category C prison.

4.4 The Board has been concerned throughout the year about the level of self-harm and the number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) cases (involving prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm). The number of open ACCTs has fluctuated but peaked at nearly 40. The number of self-harm incidents in April 2019 was the second highest among the prisons in the 10 Prisons Project and the fifth highest among all category C prisons. The staffing of the safer custody team was reduced due to staff shortages and it had five different managers in two years. This cannot help with providing a stable team.

4.5 The high number of ACCTs in the segregation unit was a major concern for both the Board and the prison at times. The Board is satisfied that the prisoners in segregation who are on ACCTs are in an appropriate and safe place and that the prison has fully justified the reasons for placing them there. However, this does have a significant impact on staffing as frequent reviews are required. ACCT reviews in the segregation unit are conducted at governor grade, resulting in better management of the risks, especially for vulnerable prisoners. Board members continue to thoroughly check open ACCTs on the wings and in the segregation unit every week and, where possible, speak to the prisoner and attend the reviews.

4.6 The staffing shortages throughout most of the year resulted in a restricted regime for prisoners which caused instability as they struggled to cope with the frustration of inconsistent routines, particularly being locked in their cells for longer.

4.7 It was not until after March 2019, when the additional support was provided, that the level of violence, bullying and self-harm showed a significant reduction. Up to that point, the prison was trying to do its best with the resources available to them.

4.8 The safer custody team has now been strengthened and changes made to the organisation of roles within the team. May 2019 figures show a reduction in the level of self-harm and the number of ACCTs; this is due to better interventions and a better regime afforded by virtue of the additional staff. Work is also being undertaken with prolific self-

harmers, including setting up a new course. The level of violence has also seen a reduction since March 2019.

4.9 One of the positive outcomes of the additional resources and support from March 2019 was that the long awaited ISFL unit was set up from 29 April. The drug and alcohol recovery service (DARS) has identified which prisoners are suitable to be resident in the unit and incentives have been introduced: extra gym sessions, an extra visit and, on completion of successful drug testing, a fast track to enhanced IEP status. The Board will monitor the success of the ISFL.

4.10 The body scanner has been used on a number of occasions and prisoners are placed in the dry cell in the segregation unit if the scan indicates a secreted item.

4.11 The standards coaching team, part of the support under the 10 Prisons Project, started in February 2019 and has made a considerable improvement to the day-to-day running of the wings, including management of the ACCT process and speaking to prisoners consistently. The Board was very impressed with its professionalism and approach to dealing with staff and prisoners.

4.12 Safer prisons meetings have once more been combined with security meetings and are held monthly. The weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM) meeting also looks at all prisoners on ACCTs and challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs).

4.13 Use of force (UOF) meetings are held monthly, chaired by the deputy governor, and are generally well attended. A Board member also attends. The meeting reviews all incidents where force is used, whether planned or unplanned. CCTV footage is viewed together with body-worn video camera (BWVC) footage, when available. There were instances where the BWVC was not turned on and the Board felt it should have been; the governor has written to staff, reminding officers to wear and turn on their BWVC. Although PAVA (an incapacitant spray) has not yet been rolled out across the wider prison estate, officers at Wealstun continue to carry it and use it as necessary. Each incident is reviewed at the UOF meeting and learning points raised with officers. The Board will continue to monitor its use closely.

4.14 The command suite has been opened a number of times during this reporting year and the Board has been properly notified in line with the agreed critical incident contingency plan.

4.15 There were two deaths in custody during the reporting period (June 2018 – May 2019) and a further drug-related death in June 2019. There were also two apparently self-inflicted deaths in the community within 24 hours of release during the year. The reports from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are awaited. The Board observed the handling of the deaths in custody and was satisfied that they were handled correctly by the prison.

4.16 The reception process is managed reasonably well. Board members observed the reception of a number of prisoners and were impressed by the efficient way they were dealt with. Prisoners are processed efficiently and moved to the induction unit on I wing. Samaritans phones are available on each wing.

5. Equality and fairness

5.1 The booking system for visits to prisoners seemed to work well. Informal chats with visitors (when entering and leaving the prison and at family days) produced very positive responses about the helpful and efficient contact with the prison's visits admin clerk. Although there were occasional incidents between prisoners and/or visitors, the general atmosphere in the visits hall was pleasant and positive. A much-appreciated refreshment counter is staffed by prisoners. Unfortunately, during the reporting year the system of external volunteers staffing the crèche area in the visits hall came to an end. A bid has now been submitted to the charity Children in Need to fund a play specialist to staff the crèche.

5.2 Any informal complaints from visitors tended to focus on delays to admission, which arose from staffing shortages. The prison organised regular Dads and Kidz days when prisoners could spend time with their children, both alone and with their partners. The team of family engagement workers (one full-time and two part-time) appointed in 2018 and provided by the Leeds-based charity Jigsaw helped with activities for partners on the Dads and Kidz days. This team has been a positive addition to family liaison and support. Amongst other things, the team runs a 10-week parenting course for prisoners, supports homework clubs and is involved in a range of liaison activities with outside bodies, including restorative justice schemes.

5.3 A welcome innovation has been special family visits days for prisoners without children. A family kitchen/dining space to facilitate special visits when families can cook and eat together was in the process of being refurbished and re-decorated by prisoners. The current contract only allowed for four such visits a year and any expansion here would be greatly welcomed. Prisoners could attend an accredited 30-hour family learning course in which, amongst other things, they develop (partly in the classroom and partly on special visits) children's reading activities and games.

5.4 Formal complaints from prisoners relating to visits averaged about six per month – 25% of these were upheld. Most complaints related to either closed visits or issues concerning access on visiting days to particular family members/social contacts. There was only one application to the Board relating to visits during the year and this issue had been satisfactorily resolved by the time the Board received the application.

5.5 The chaplaincy team played a crucial role in many prison day-to-day activities eg participation in ACCT and segregation reviews, visiting prisoners in the segregation unit, the DEAT meetings and the induction of prisoners. Regular religious services were provided at the weekend, major religious festivals were celebrated, and prayer and study group sessions were available during the week. On a daily basis, the chaplains carried a heavy, unpredictable and demanding pastoral caseload supporting prisoners with personal and family problems. The chaplaincy team consisted of a full-time Anglican chaplain with part-time chaplains in the following areas: Roman Catholic (1 x 30 hours plus 1 sessional); Free Church (1 sessional plus a volunteer); Sikh (1 sessional); Muslim (1 x 18 hours, 1 x 9 hours and 1 x 4 hours); and Buddhist (1 sessional). During the year, a part-time Jewish chaplain was added to the team. Other denominational chaplains were available on request and the team was supported by a volunteer chaplaincy assistant.

5.6 The temporary absence of a full-time Anglican chaplain (following the unanticipated retirement reported toward the end of last year) added to the pressure on the chaplaincy team and the arrival of a new full-time Anglican chaplain during the year was, therefore, greatly welcome. However, since the end of the reporting year it was announced that the Anglican chaplain is to leave. His replacement will be a priority if the significant demands on the chaplaincy team are to be adequately met. As reported in previous reports, it is clear that

both the efficiency of the chaplaincy team and the role satisfaction of individual chaplains would benefit from the appointment of a managing chaplain. This issue is recognised by prison management and the pursuit of funding continues, but it looks unlikely that funding will be available. Although the difficulties (reported last year) presented to the working of the chaplaincy by their split-site accommodation have continued this year, plans are now well advanced to develop a single site for August 2019.

5.7 In a typical month over the reporting period, the ethnic background of the prisoner population was: white 77.5%; Asian 14.5%; black 3.0%; mixed 4.5% and other/not stated 0.5%. Although the prison's aim is to replicate this pattern on each wing, operational issues made this difficult to achieve on all wings. Approximately 20% of the prison population identified themselves as having some form of disability. The majority of the prisoners identifying themselves as having a disability fell into the categories of mental illness or learning difficulties. The number of prisoners requiring a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) averaged about seven over the year.

5.8 There were planned quarterly meetings of the DEAT, which also had prisoner representation (for part of the meeting) and an external representative from a local university. Amongst other things, the DEAT meeting monitors the pattern and progression of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs). The reduction in resourcing in this area from four years ago, and the associated staffing changes and instability, continued to produce problems. DEAT meetings did not always happen on schedule and were sometimes cancelled or postponed at short notice. Recruitment of disability representatives and the organising of support groups for prisoners with protected characteristics were often difficult. The processing and tracking of DIRFs was often unreliable and difficult to trace. It is not at all clear that prison records of disability issues across the prison could be relied on.

5.9 The prison management team seemed to be aware of inadequacies in the equality area and set in motion an in-depth review of what needs to be done to re-focus activities and structures in order to remedy matters. However, funding for the equality area is not ring fenced in the budget and so cannot be properly resourced. It certainly should be a priority for the prison management team to reassure itself of the robustness, clarity, reliability and ease of use of procedures and records in the areas of equality and diversity.

5.10 As with last year, the kitchen continued to be proactive and successful in seeking to cater for religion-based diets and festivals. Prisoners expressed satisfaction with the daily halal and other religious diet requirements. Special food was supplied for major religious festivals such as Christmas, Easter, the Ramadan month and the festival of Eid. Caribbean meals were supplied during Black History Week and, as part of special 'taster theme nights', prisoners from the Traveller community were involved in producing related food items.

5.11 A review of the IEP policy was completed and an updated policy published. The policy also includes a full facilities list which is available to prisoners. A main thrust of the new policy is to more fully involve both prisoners and wing staff in the process of assessing individual prisoners' IEP status, as well as restrictions to the regime for prisoners on the basic regime. However, the Board has found that policy is still not fully embedded across the prison. Further work is being undertaken to upskill CMs to ensure the policy is consistently applied.

5.12 The Board undertook a detailed review of the prison complaints system as there had been a number of complaints from prisoners that responses were not being received on time and were not satisfactory. The Board agreed that overall the complaints procedure seems to be working reasonably well. The complaints clerk is diligent about trying to get responses on time and checking the quality of the response. The number of confidential complaints to the prison (Comp 2s) submitted is small (around 12% a month) with 35% being upheld (against

45% on standard complaints to the prison (Comp 1s). This would suggest that Comp 1s are generally handled satisfactorily.

5.13 However, the recorded date of response is not the actual date that the prisoner receives the response, so timescales are not being met. In addition, interim responses did not include a date by which to expect the final response, so responses could have been missed.

5.14 As a result of the IMB report, the prison is now undertaking a review of the complaints process. The Board is looking forward to the outcome.

6. Segregation

6.1 The segregation unit is a purpose-built building with cells for 13 prisoners and short-term holding cells for prisoners awaiting adjudication. Prisoners are removed from the mainstream prison either for their own safety, having received threats from other prisoners, or because they need to be kept separate from the main prison population due to their behaviour or risk level. In addition, cellular confinement is given as a punishment for infringements of the prison discipline rules.

6.2 Issues around the lack of management ownership were raised on a number of occasions with the Governor and were taken seriously. However, the continual rotation of governors and CMs, with limited handovers between them, has affected the stability of the unit with the result that management of the unit was unsatisfactory, with no one in charge on a daily basis. There was a lack of proactive management to get prisoners reintegrated into the mainstream prison or moved to another establishment. The transfer of prisoners out of the segregation unit was normally carried out monthly as part of the 'virtual seg' moves, where prisoners are exchanged between nearby prisons, to normal location, once they have been segregated for 42 days. Throughout the first 10 months of the year, it was normal for three prisoners to be moved this way each month.

6.3 The additional support provided to the prison from March 2019 resulted in a new experienced governor being seconded to manage the segregation and ISFL unit. This quickly made a considerable difference, with prisoners generally being reintegrated into a different wing and ad-hoc transfers being arranged. At the latest 'virtual seg' there were no prisoners to be transferred. It is hoped that this will be the norm for the future. The Board will continue to monitor the position closely.

6.4 Although there have been changes in governors and CMs throughout the year, segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG) meetings were held regularly. It was, however, disappointing that there was always a last-minute rush just before the meeting to find and collate the necessary information, as new people had not been made aware of their responsibilities at handover. This also meant that statistics on length of stay, number over 42 days etc. were not available to the Board.

6.5 Notification to the Board of segregation, special accommodation etc, continued to be sporadic and depended on who was on duty at the time. Hopefully, having a more stable staffing position will resolve this issue. The Board will continue to monitor this closely.

6.6 All segregated prisoners are seen weekly by the Board member on rota and can ask to speak privately if necessary. The prison reviews continuing stays in segregation as required. Review boards are now held at the same time every fortnight, allowing an IMB member to attend. The correct procedures are being followed. The reviews are well run, with prisoners being allowed to contribute fully.

6.7 A significant number of prisoners in the segregation unit (sometimes a third) have an open ACCT. The Board is satisfied that removal to the unit of a prisoner with an open ACCT is not necessarily inappropriate; however, the Board is concerned about the high number of ACCTs and the pressure this puts on the limited staffing and on the regime for the other segregated prisoners.

6.8 The regime in the unit is reasonable, with daily exercise (up to two hours a day), phone calls and showers offered. The unit has two exercise yards. Prisoners have access to radios, books and education and can also have access to Listeners and Samaritans if required. The segregation paperwork is generally well kept.

6.9 The number of adjudications increased significantly over the year, eventually generating a backlog of over 500, with a large number being remanded or adjourned for reporting officers, healthcare reports etc. This was probably due to the increase in violence and drug use and the shortage of staff. Although 20-25 adjudications were being held each day

there was no reduction in the backlog. Another impact of the lack of staff in the segregation unit was the fact that a number of adjudications heard by the independent adjudicator were dismissed because of the quality of the paperwork. Additional sessions were arranged, and a review of the older adjudications was carried out, but with no significant impact. However, following the change in governors in March 2019 and the additional staffing support provided, additional sessions were planned and maintained, resulting in a reduction of the backlog to less than 100 awaiting hearings. Board members attend the quarterly adjudication standards meeting and will continue to monitor the situation.

6.10 It is hoped that the change of management in the segregation unit planned for the next reporting year will continue to maintain the improved staff-prisoner relationships, with staff knowing the prisoners better and treating them with respect, compassion and professionalism, and that the length of stays remains low. The Board will continue to monitor these issues closely.

7. Accommodation (including communication)

7.1 Although the fabric of the prison has many faults, the receipt of 10 Prisons Project funding has allowed some improvements to be started. At the same time, Amey has increased the number of people on site, and together with adjustments to working practices this has improved their ability to carry out work on the fabric of the estate. It is encouraging to see what an increase in resources can do.

7.2 It was stated in last year's report that there needs to be greater ownership of small schemes by wing staff, from initial identification of the fault through to signing off the scheme on completion. It is important that the person raising the job also signs it off. It has been pointed out to the Board that this is impossible to achieve with the current shortage and turnover of staff. This may be a valid point just now, but the issue should not be ignored and the Board will return to it during the next reporting year.

7.3 There have also been successes. Q branch is a team of prisoners which has been operating for the past two years to improve living conditions in the prison, employing a programme of cell painting, cleaning, and small repairs. They carry out the specialist cleaning of cells, previously undertaken by outside contractors at the considerable cost of several hundred pounds per cell. Not only does their work improve conditions in and around the prison, it reduces costs and provides prisoners with the opportunity to gain marketable skills for the outside world: a win-win situation. The introduction of daily cell checks by the SMT has also resulted in an improvement in cleanliness and decency on the wings.

7.4 Around 20%-25% of applications received by the Board relate to prisoners' property going astray, either on arrival at Wealstun or during the move between cells within the prison. Having observed the arrival process, the procedures in place appear robust and work well, with communication between staff and prisoners being clear and understood. Yet complaints about property going missing are still occurring. The prison's response to these issues has been that reception was not fully staffed so was unable to process property and other staff shortages meant cell clearances were not carried out correctly, resulting in property going missing. It remains a constant challenge to ensure that mistakes do not occur. The Board will continue to monitor these issues closely.

7.5 The work on replacing the kitchen floor has finally started. Hopefully, there is sufficient expertise in managing the scheme at ground level to ensure its effective completion. It is hoped that there will be a proper post-project appraisal to assess value for money.

7.6 The Board continues to be impressed by the kitchen staff and the variety and standard of food produced. Very few applications have been received concerning meals, and the plans for a limited menu whilst the kitchen is temporarily relocated during the floor replacement are excellent. Prisoners with special diets are dealt with well.

7.7 In-cell phones are currently being installed across the prison; this is due to be completed in October 2019 when call charges will be reduced by 50%.

7.8 The revised core day implemented in October 2018 introduced more differentiation between basic and standard prisoners' regimes. This has resulted in some issues for prisoners on a basic regime who have complained about not having enough time out of their cells for showers, phone calls and association, and the curtailment of time for visits. This is caused by a lack of staffing resulting in officers not being able to adhere to the published times for unlocks. The prison is working to improve the situation and the Board will continue to monitor the position.

7.9 There have been a number of complaints to the Board about the limited amount of kit available. For example, at times there were no clean towels in the segregation unit and only small or very large boxer shorts were available. This has now been addressed by the prison.

7.10 Regimes have been restricted due to a shortage of staff throughout most of the year and prisoners were notified accordingly through the prisoner information desk (PID) workers on each wing. However, there were some complaints concerning poor communications about when the library was available to them. (See section 9.)

8. Healthcare (including mental health and social care)

8.1 Care UK holds the contract for healthcare services. This includes primary health, mental health and substance misuse. Psychosocial services, psychiatry and psychology services are sub-contracted through Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust. Dental services are provided by Time for Teeth, physiotherapy and podiatry are provided by Premier Health, optical care by Pen Optical and x-ray and ultrasound by Global Diagnostics,

8.2 Healthcare staff generally work 12.5-hour shifts from 7am to 7.30pm. GP services are provided by a practice in nearby Wetherby. The 111 service is used for on-call, out-of-hours, Saturdays and Sundays for GP services.

8.3 Prisoner requests for appointments are made through healthcare applications which are assessed on the same day they are received through nurse triage; waiting times are equivalent to those in the community. Medicines are dispensed three times daily by pharmacy technicians and nursing staff. Between 70% and 75% of prisoners are on medication and a quarter of those are on methadone replacements. This figure has doubled over the past 12 months and the need for mental health services has also increased over the past year.

8.4 Tele-health is working well, although contracts with more local hospitals are being looked at. As this service has evolved, the need for more local contracts has become apparent where the prisoner requires more than just tele-health.

8.5 Dental waiting times are comparable with those in the community and prisoners are generally seen within six weeks unless it is urgent. However, since the regime changed in December 2018, dental waiting times have been affected by prisoners being unable to access the service because there are insufficient officers to provide an escort. This has also been a problem for other healthcare appointments and can skew the figures.

8.6 The time taken to issue medication continues to be a problem as prisoners are not always unlocked on time. The SMT is working on improving the situation by ensuring that regime times are adhered to. Two new treatment hatches have been installed (from 10 Prisons Project funding) which it is hoped will result in fewer problems when issuing medication.

8.7 The prison has been a no-smoking establishment since 2017. Prisoners are supported and given nicotine patches free of charge as part of the smoking cessation programme. Prisoners can purchase vapes through their normal canteen; however, this can be difficult for healthcare providers, who do not advocate their use where they have not been healthcare approved.

8.8 The mental health service is integrated with the wider healthcare team and they are presently at their full complement of staff trained in mental health which is sufficient at the moment.

8.9 There are no longer any healthcare representatives due to a security issue. However, in an effort to restore this function, the organisation A Better Life is coming into the prison to run some patient prisoner council groups.

9. Education and other purposeful activities

9.1 NOVUS continues as service provider for education and skills. Implementation of the new prison education framework contracts began in April 2019. HMP Wealstun was fortunate that education staff did not face redeployment or redundancies as elsewhere. Delays have occurred in recruitment processes, however, for example in the library and in plastering and bricklaying workshops.

9.2 Recognised accredited qualifications are used on courses. These have changed to fit the prison education framework. This affected the interior fittings course, where new tools were required for the City and Guilds bench joinery course. Since not all tools are yet supplied, only half a cohort can work there. Achievements such as an Open University maths course, GCSE physics and Level 3 IT qualifications have been gained by prisoners. Functional skills qualifications are above the national average except in maths Level 1.

9.3 It is difficult to provide education efficiency figures because a new system of recording, called CURIOUS, was introduced in April 2019. Once all the data have been input, it will go live. The last figures available were in March when efficiency reached 61.78%. There was an allocation rate of 88.6% and attendance of 69.44%. The Board agree that this is a disappointing figure and the prison should work to make improvements urgently.

9.4 'Measure your own progress' is a work-based individual learning plan, which is offered to prisoners in all the industries workshops and the kitchen. Prisoners are encouraged to participate and many volunteer. It involves self-assessment marking against various employability skills, and targets are set. It is proving successful.

9.5 The gym continues to provide sessions for basic level prisoners once a week. Sessions are offered as incentives on programmes such as Thinking Skills and DARS.

9.6 Jigsaw is the provider of support for children and families. It emphasises the importance of family ties by presenting family learning and parenting courses, including homework clubs, Dads and Kidz days, restorative solutions, family mediation services and 'E-mail a prisoner'. Prison staff seldom receive thanks, but one prisoner made great efforts to contact Jigsaw to thank staff for their work with him once he had been released. Regular family strategy meetings are held with a variety of agencies to review the programmes and reward progress and achievement through the quarterly celebrations for learners, workers, offending programmes, Jigsaw and gym nominations.

9.7 The Shannon Trust supports prisoners who help each other to learn to read. During one month, for example, there were 89 reading sessions given by seven mentors. The trust agreed to offer additional staff support, but it was not able to be used as, although the hours needed were built into the prison profile, staff shortages meant that it could not be utilised.

9.8 Library facilities are good. There is a main library, and four smaller ones are spread throughout the estate. Apart from a wide variety of books and leaflets, advice is provided as well as enrichment activities. This year these have included the Six Book Challenge, World War One commemorations, Chinese New Year, Movember and World Book Night. Prisoners can order books. In the visitors' centre, one workshop has produced a low-level bookshelf for children's books made from an old guitar. A timetable organises each prisoner's access to 30 minutes of library time each week. One member of staff provides weekly individual library sessions to prisoners in the Seg.

9.9 Unfortunately, the new staff profile was not able to be fully effective because of staff shortages and this, together with the removal of free flow (where prisoners move around the prison unescorted), created problems for the library. Supplying and organising books over a wide-spread site is complicated. Moreover, there were not enough officers to escort groups of prisoners to timetabled sessions. These problems were compounded by the frustrations of library staff, resulting in a resignation. Prisoners did not receive their regular library entitlement for several months. In May 2019, for example, seven evening sessions in the World Faith library were cancelled.

9.10 The Board has previously informed management of its concern that some prisoners do not receive their weekly 30 minutes' entitlement and is disappointed at the slowness of measures to improve. The Board is continuing to monitor the situation.

9.11 Board members visiting the art department have been impressed by the enthusiasm of prisoners and staff and the standard of work.

9.12 The Construction Safety Certificate Scheme is a popular option for learners. Sixteen prisoners participate in each cohort and there is an 87.5% success rate. There are only four cohorts a year because it is an expensive course.

10. Work, vocational training and employment

10.1 During the reporting period, an average of 11 prison industrial workshops were operational. The performance target for hours worked in industry during this period was nearly met in May 2018, reaching 81.96%. However, from June 2018 to April 2019 the performance subsequently dipped, reaching a low point in March 2019 of just 61.74% of the target. Different factors contributed to this decline throughout the year. Firstly, there were a lot of long-term staff absences and vacancies in the workshops. Secondly, workshops were closed for security reasons and maintenance. In particular, the laundry workshop was closed repeatedly due to mechanical problems and was finally shut down in February 2019 for complete refurbishment. It is scheduled to reopen in September 2019. The Board is disappointed with these figures.

10.2 Of the five vocational training courses due to be run by NOVUS, only three were running, with the key plastering and bricklaying courses being closed due to lack of tutors. These courses are particularly popular among prisoners and all are oversubscribed.

10.3 Of particular note is the success of The Mess workshop, opened in March 2018. It has a high level of attendance, feedback from prisoners is very positive and it has a long waiting list. Staff and prisoners alike reported that working in The Mess 'didn't feel like being in prison'. This is clearly an important achievement.

10.4 The procedural allocation of work seems to run smoothly. During the first seven days of the prisoners' induction process, NOVUS carries out an assessment based on information gathered from each prisoner. An individual action plan is then drawn up and a workplace allocation made. Throughout the year attendance at work by those enrolled was good, at 78%, which indicates a high level of commitment among prisoners. By contrast, approximately 10% of prisoners are reported as not working.

10.5 The prison has undertaken two notable initiatives during the past year to inform prisoners about vocational courses and workshops, and employment opportunities available upon their release. The first was the publication of two brochures – 'Employment pathways' and 'Resettlement opportunities' – containing details of different vocational courses and work options.

10.6 The second is a monthly resettlement hub event, orientated towards prisoners serving their final eight weeks prior to release. Here, organisations such as NOVUS Work and Tempus Novo, provide information on employment and accommodation support to prisoners on release with input from probation and other external agencies.

10.7 The Board feels it is vital that the prison continues to strengthen links with local employers and identify employment opportunities for prisoners upon release. The national education and employment strategy, published by the Ministry of Justice in May 2018, states in paragraph 106: 'At the heart of this strategy is the recognition that employment on release is a key component of a prisoner's rehabilitation'.

10.8 Over the past year the prison has made some progress, working through organisations such as NOVUS Work, Jobcentre Plus and Tempus Novo. However, to date these initiatives appear to have only been of benefit to certain prisoners as the number of spaces available are very small.

11. Resettlement preparation

11.1 Rehabilitation is one of the four priority areas for HMP Wealstun throughout 2019 – 2020.

11.2 The OMU has responsibility for the administration of each prisoner's sentence. It checks warrants and calculates sentences, working out key dates. This is always done in days. One prisoner complained to the Board that his name had been misspelt. However, prisoners' names are taken from the court register and cannot be changed in prison.

11.3 Offender managers and supervisors predict the risk to the public from reoffending. Each prisoner has an offender assessment system (OASys) review, with prisoners arriving with completed initial reviews. The challenges faced by the OMU during the previous (2017–2018) reporting period were recorded as worse than during 2016–2017 because of staffing problems. There has been an improvement during this reporting period as the unit is almost fully staffed with offender supervisors, but there are vacancies for case administration workers. This means there is still a backlog awaiting attention for processing. Shorter sentences also mean there is less time to assess risk and prepare for resettlement.

11.4 Until March 2019, the staffing position was precarious, meaning that OMIC key worker delivery could not be implemented as quickly as had been planned. With an increase in staffing after March, interviews with key workers are now held daily. There is usually a caseload of five or six for each officer. Not every prisoner yet has a key worker. There does not seem to be much difference between the duties of personal officers and key workers. The prison plans to complete the implementation of OMIC by the end of 2019 and the Board will monitor and check its effectiveness.

11.5 Category C prisons cannot usually manage to support release on temporary licence (ROTL). However, one prisoner at Wealstun was supported for several months with work in Leeds and another with attending regular hospital appointments on accompanied ROTL.

11.6 St Giles Trust is fully staffed. It manages the final 12 weeks of a sentence as prisoners prepare for the outside world. Up to three attempts are made to contact a prisoner for an appointment as they reach the 12-week date before release. Prisoners are released to permanent, supported, approved housing or else have no fixed abode (NFA). Sadly, local housing places are difficult to acquire. The average monthly figure over the past year for prisoners discharged with NFA was 13%. In November 2018, 18 men had NFA to be released to, although in October that figure was 13. In April 2019, 21 had NFA on release.

11.7 A resettlement hub meeting takes place on the first Wednesday of every month. The removal of free flow has created a problem with the availability of staff to escort prisoners to the meeting, having an adverse effect.

11.8 The discharge grant prisoners receive on release is £46. By contrast an ordinary single benefit rate is £80 per week. On release each prisoner is assisted in getting to a job centre (in one case being driven by a member of staff). That discrepancy of £34 for the first week after leaving prison is not helpful. Debt, or even reoffending, are risks. The prison Jobcentre Plus coach is aware of this and tries to lobby for improvement in the grant.

C Section – The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

The Board currently comprises eight members. Despite the small number of members, all core duties were performed: weekly rota visits, applications and monthly Board meetings. A recent recruitment campaign has resulted in two new members being recruited. The Board, unfortunately, lost an experienced member last year and there was a further resignation in June 2019.

Weekly rota visits continue to take place, following a system which reflects the scale and variety of the areas visited and the need to record members' findings effectively and objectively. All prisoners in segregation are spoken to and all prisoner applications are answered, speaking to the prisoners themselves where possible. In addition, open ACCT documents on the wings visited are checked for completeness and accuracy to ensure that the process is being followed, and ACCT reviews are attended. Such activities brought members of the Board into direct contact with both prisoners and staff.

A Board meeting is held each month, which the Governor or a member of the SMT attends, and serious concerns that were identified during visits are raised.

The number of applications to the Board has risen by 10% this year with property issues within the establishment rising by nearly 90%. This is not a surprise to the Board as reception was not staffed adequately for property to be properly managed. This was a direct result of the staffing shortages.

Board statistics	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	263
Total number of segregation reviews attended	225

D Section Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	4	8
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	7	5
C	Equality	0	1
D	Purposeful activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	13	11
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	7	13
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	1	5
F	Food and kitchens	4	2
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	13	14
H 1	Property within this establishment	28	15
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	21	16
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	1
I	Sentence management including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	25	20
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	31	23
K	Transfers	11	10
	Miscellaneous	21	25
	Total number of IMB applications	187	169