



Annual report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Wymott

for reporting year
June 2018 – May 2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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A Sections 1 – 3

1 Statutory role of the Independent Monitoring Board

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 Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) 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

Introduction to the report

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

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

Overall prisoners continued to receive fair treatment at HMP Wymott in 2018 – 2019. However, shortage of mental health staff has led to long delays in assessments and the inability to assure adequate follow-up treatment (8.10 and 8.11). The Board still feels that the safeguarding of prisoners' property both within Wymott and on transfer falls below required standards (7.13). In addition, staff shortages in the business hub have led to responses to prisoners' complaints exceeding statutory time limits (5.9).

Are prisoners treated humanely?

During the reporting period, whilst maintaining the previous decency agenda, the prison has adopted the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) rehabilitative culture. Nevertheless, this has been undermined by the appalling state of repair on A and B wings (7.3). Social care for the increasing number of older prisoners is regularly compromised by lack of appropriately trained staff, leaving prisoners in situations that are neither dignified nor humane (8.12 and 8.13). Despite general improvements in healthcare, there have still been instances where the delivery of essential medicines has failed.

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

Prisoners have continued to develop their employability skills through very good education provision and employment/training opportunities. HMP Wymott is not a resettlement prison and has struggled to provide support for the large number of prisoners who are released from here every year. Latterly a new initiative has been launched to help these prisoners, and the Board will continue to monitor this (11.1). The offender management unit (OMU) remains of great concern to the Board. Staff shortages have meant that prisoners have often been left very anxious due to the lack of information needed to enable them to progress (11.2 and 11.3).

Main areas for development

To the Minister

- Given the persistently increasing pressures on the prison, the healthcare services and the wider community resulting from the use of psychoactive substances (PSS), what further strategies are being considered to tackle this national problem (4.4, 8.14)?
- Although Wymott is not a resettlement prison and does not have the resources to support prisoners prior to release, it has continued to release large numbers of

prisoners during the reporting period (11.1). Does the Minister have plans to address this situation?

- The Board has made repeated representations at both local and regional level about the conditions on A and B wings, to no avail (7.3). Will the minister consider authorising extra resources to address this appalling situation?

To the Prison Service

- Given the increase in the problems caused by the use of psychoactive substances (PS) – violence, disruption to the regime, ambulance call-outs etc (4.4, 8.14), what plans are there to allocate extra resources to support prison governors in tackling this major issue?
- Wymott is not a resettlement prison, yet it continued to release around 300 prisoners over the reporting period (11.1). What plans are there to allocate resources to this issue?
- The Board continued to receive a large number of applications about loss of prisoners' property (see 7.13). In its response to the 2017 – 2018 report, HMPPS referred to work on a new prisoners' property framework. When will this be published?
- The Board has long considered that the prison kitchen is unfit for purpose (7.8). It was designed for 800 prisoners and now services a population of around 1150. Are there any plans for an upgrade in the foreseeable future?
- The promised refurbishment of A and B wings has still to be confirmed (7.3). Can the Prison Service give an indication of when this is likely to happen?
- Despite some repairs, the roofing over the vulnerable prisoner (VP) workshops continues to leak, causing damage to expensive machinery, and thus extra cost (10.5). Can the Prison Service give an indication of when this is likely to be addressed?

To the governor

- Can the prison develop a more efficient approach to handling prisoners' property within the prison, with especial reference to cell clearances and items handed in at visits (7.13)?
- The Board continues to express concern regarding the siting of the two constant watch cells (6.2). Are these to be relocated?
- The Board has become aware of regime slippage in a number of areas, such as unlocking times, labour movement and escorts back from healthcare (7.12, 8.5). Are there plans to address this?
- A strength of the prison has been its prisoner involvement through the prison council and other forums. However, during the reporting period the Board has been disappointed to notice repeated late cancellation of meetings and a fall-off in attendance by key prison staff (5.10). Is the governor addressing this issue?

- Following recent reports from the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (4.9), is the governor considering a review of the prison's policy on the use of restraints?

To the providers (of healthcare/education/maintenance etc)

Bridgewater NHS Trust/Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust

- Prisoners regularly complain to the Board about long waits to see the dentist and late starts of clinics (8.4). Are there any plans to improve this?
- The Board is concerned that the provision of carers is often inadequate. This leads to over-reliance on untrained officers to carry out caring tasks beyond their remit. Prisoners may at times be left in undignified and inhumane conditions (8.12 and 8.13). Are there plans to address this?
- Throughout the reporting period, mental health services have been under-staffed, and illness/maternity has exacerbated this situation. Although agency staff have helped to clear the initial assessments, the mental health team is unable to meet the identified needs in a timely manner (8.10). Are there plans to address this?

Amey

- The Board remains concerned at the length of time taken for even routine repair and maintenance work to be completed (7.8).

Improvements

- The Board would like to commend the prison on the improvements made to the outside environment, particularly on the mainstream side of the prison and the grounds of K wing (7.2).
- The Board commends the prison and Phoenix Futures for the work done in the visitors' centre and within the context of the visits hall. There are also more family days. The introduction of a pets as therapy (PAT) dog has had a positive effect on some of the older prisoners and VPs (9.7, 11.8).

3 Description of establishment

3.1 HMP Wymott is an adult male category C training prison with an operating capacity of 1176 prisoners and a certified normal accommodation of 1103 prisoners. The population comprises approximately 40% mainstream category C prisoners and 60% men convicted of a sexual offence. The majority of the prisoners have four or more years to serve.

3.2 The accommodation comprises a number of specialist wings including a care and reablement wing (supported by an older prisoners' activities centre (CAMEO) delivered by the Salvation Army), a drug therapeutic community wing, a psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit (to support a drug-free return to the community), an integrated drug treatment wing (managing prisoners on a controlled methadone programme), four wings for men convicted of sexual offences and three other wings. Over the reporting period, approximately 120 prisoners have been doubled-up in cells designed for single occupancy.

3.3 Healthcare in the prison is provided by Bridgewater Community NHS Trust and Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust (GMMHT), and services include GP surgeries, dentistry, specialist clinics and mental health services. A Building Futures team works with prisoners with substance misuse issues, helping to prevent relapse and engage in recovery.

3.4 Education is provided by NOVUS and a full education programme is on offer from pre-entry level up to degree level, with particular focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills.

3.5 The prison workshops offer a range of employments, many of which can lead to nationally accredited qualifications. Some of these workshops are operated on a commercial basis providing quality services to external clients and effectively constitute a 'working prison'.

3.6 General maintenance within the prison is provided by Amey.

3.7 An active chaplaincy supports a range of faiths and the full-time chaplains are assisted by sessional ministers and volunteers. Pastoral support and family liaison are provided through the chaplaincy. The chapel also accommodates the prison choir and a small music group.

3.8 Other facilities include a PE department consisting of a large sports hall, a well-equipped gym, and a full-size outdoor sports field.

3.9 As Wymott is a training prison, the resources for preparing prisoners for release are limited. However, Achieve North-West provides help and support with accommodation and finances and CAMEO provides support for older prisoners. Following last year's IMB report, the prison is also developing a pre-release support programme.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 Safety

4.1 The reception process for new prisoners was generally good during 2017 – 2018, although the prison has been criticised by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) for not having a robust process for secondary health screening during the induction period. Inductions have tended to rely heavily on DVDs to introduce the prisoners to Wymott, and the Board has found it difficult to know when inductions are taking place. This has affected members' ability to both participate and to monitor the process.

4.2 There is a sound peer support system in place, through the Listeners and safety representatives on the wings. Prisoners who are particularly vulnerable are safeguarded through the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management process, and there are two gated cells that allow prisoners to be continually observed if it is thought necessary. However, the Board continues to be critical of the location of these cells, as one is in a noisy segregation unit and the other is off a linking corridor. The prison plans to re-designate the area where the latter one is located, but it is unclear where it will be moved to.

4.3 The number of ACCT documents opened each month has remained stable (33 in May 2019 compared to 39 in May 2018). The Board monitors the documentation and attends reviews whenever possible. It concludes that safeguarding of vulnerable prisoners (VPs) on ACCTs continues to be good, and the quality of the observations and care maps has improved.

4.4 Wing observation books have regularly reported bullying and threats on the wings, particularly on the mainstream side of the prison, and there have been instances of prisoners on the mainstream side telling board members that they feel unsafe. Debt linked to use of illicit drugs is a major factor. Prisoners claim that psychoactive substances (PS) are readily available in Wymott, and Board scrutiny of wing observation books supports this. The prison has adopted strategies to try and counter this, such as photocopying of all mail and developing the Email a Prisoner scheme, but it remains a major concern.

4.5 Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) were introduced to de-escalate and restrain anti-social behaviour or to support those who become vulnerable. The number of prisoners being managed in this way has risen through the year, and in May 2019, 39 prisoners were subject to the CSIP process. Each prisoner has a tailor-made plan and the Board commends the safer living team on the work done in this area.

4.6 Reported incidents of violence were fairly stable over the year. There were 122 in total (120 last year), although the quarter February to April 2019 recorded the highest figure of 34. Of that number there were 10 staff assaults, 13 prisoner assaults and 11 fights.

4.7 Force was used to restrain prisoners 269 times during this reporting year, up from 246 in 2017 – 2018. The highest monthly figures were recorded in April and May 2019. Hub data indicates that Wymott's performance in comparison to other similar prisons fell in April 2019 in relation to assaults, fights, injuries and use of force, which reflects the Board's concerns. Recording of incidents of use of force is still poor, with only 53.5% of reports being completed in May 2019, a reversal of previous progress.

4.8 During the year there were 480 recorded incidents of self-harm, up from 335 in 2017 – 2018. This increase is worrying, although the data is affected by the small number of repeated self-harmers. Healthcare issues (including medication and mental health), debt and bullying were seen to be key drivers, although a number of prisoners have told staff that they used it as a coping mechanism.

4.9 There were four deaths in custody over the reporting period. Two have been confirmed as natural causes, one was apparently natural causes (awaiting inquest) the fourth was

apparently self-inflicted linked to PS use (awaiting inquest). Following PPO reports on deaths in custody, the Board has raised concerns with the governor over the use of restraints on prisoners being taken to hospital. We do recognise however that the prison has to weigh the prisoner's state of health against concerns for public safety. The Board commends the work of the prison's family liaison team in supporting bereaved families and prisoners.

5 Equality and fairness

5.1 During the year, Wymott 'rebranded' its diversity and equality action team as Wymott Equalities Board (WEB). It has continued to meet bi-monthly with each wing invited to send a representative. However, it has continued to prove difficult to recruit from certain wings, particularly on the mainstream side. A board member attends most of the WEB meetings.

5.2 The prison has a discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) system for reporting of unfairness in relation to the protected characteristics. Sixty-seven DIRFs were submitted during the reporting year, a significant increase on the number from the previous year. It is unclear what the reason for this is. Thirty-six DIRFs were related to race, 26 related to religion or belief, 3 to disability and 2 to sexual orientation. Twenty two of the complaints were upheld. A Board member has sampled a cross-section of DIRFs, and most responses were sent within seven days of the complaint being made. The responses were found to be clear and respectful.

5.3 The chaplaincy has continued to support a range of faith and religious activities, including prayers, reading groups and celebration of religious festivals. Prisoners reported high levels of satisfaction with this service. Prisoners from minority ethnic groups have also appreciated the work of the prison kitchen in providing special meals for their religious festivals.

5.4 The prison has a significant number of older prisoners with complex physical disabilities and has made significant efforts to meet their needs. Those with mobility problems are mainly located on the ground floor and at the time of writing 65 prisoners have personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) in place. The Board commends the adoption of a telecare system in 11 cells occupied by the most frail and vulnerable prisoners to detect falls and other needs especially at night.

5.5 The Board commends the prison for the work that has been done over the reporting year to raise awareness among both staff and prisoners of the needs of an increasing number of prisoners with dementia.

5.6 The Board welcomes the introduction of an optional online diversity training module available to all officers, and would like to see it become a compulsory part of the new officer training. It has been encouraging to see a significant increase in the numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) officers in the prison.

5.7 The visits halls have been refurbished and a small number of high tables and chairs provided to help older and infirm visitors. Lack of consistency in the timing of visits has continued to be brought to the attention of the Board by prisoners. Visits accessibility from the wings for some disabled prisoners is difficult due to the stairlift being slow and regularly breaking down. This can create delays and can cause frustration.

5.8 Wymott has recently updated its incentives and earned privileges (IEP) policy in line with national guidelines. Under the old scheme prisoners often complained that they had not been issued with a written notification of an IEP warning, so the Board will monitor whether this improves under the new scheme.

5.9 Prisoners are aware of how to complain about prison matters, but this year the Board has received numerous applications from them stating that they have not received responses in a timely manner. The business hub has suffered from severe staff shortages over the latter part of the year that have impacted upon its work, and this may in part account for the huge increase in applications to the Board.

5.10 The prison council has met regularly to allow prisoner representatives to bring issues of concern to governors and heads of department from across the prison, but the Board has been disappointed at the decline in attendance by key prison staff over the year. This has resulted in frustration for prisoners as issues have not been resolved.

6 Segregation/care and separation unit

6.1 The accommodation in the care and separation unit (CSU) has been enhanced this year by the conversion of two cells into a comfortable interview room containing a wooden table and chairs and a fish tank. This room is used for ACCT reviews and other prisoner interviews. Exercise equipment has been provided in one of the exercise yards.

6.2 The unit still houses a constant watch cell for accommodating any prisoner who needs continual observation for his own safety. The Board has long considered this to be an inappropriate location due to the noise level, and has asked the governor to consider moving it to a calmer setting.

6.3 Throughout the year, the Board's rota reports have regularly commended the officers in the CSU for their dedication and professionalism in a challenging environment. The work of the prison orderlies in keeping the unit clean and tidy also deserves acknowledgment.

6.4 The most up-to-date prison reports from June 2018 to March 2019 indicate that the average number of prisoners in the unit each week has remained steady at 16.6. This is comparable to the previous two years, although the Board's rota reports for April and May 2019 suggest a slight rise at the end of the reporting year.

6.5 The average length of stay in the CSU has increased slightly to 15.6 days. This reflects the increasing difficulties experienced by the prison in trying to relocate some very complex prisoners. Over the year, three prisoners remained in the CSU for over three months consecutively. This is not satisfactory, but the Board is satisfied that correct procedures were followed in supporting these men.

6.6 The Board was informed promptly when prisoners were signed up under good order and discipline (GOOD) rules or for their own interest. A member usually attended their first review after 72 hours. A Board member also visited all prisoners in the unit once a week and attended the scheduled weekly reviews. Prisoners mostly attended and engaged with their reviews. The Board can report that the reviews were almost always conducted appropriately, with input from the mental health team. On the odd occasion when they were not, the member present was able to discuss this with the attending governor.

6.7 All prisoners were visited daily by the duty governor and a chaplain. The regularity of GP visits has improved over this year, although the Board has repeatedly complained that conversations should not take place through the prisoners' observation panels.

6.8 During its weekly visits, the Board often found that prisoners were asleep. This meant that they were awake at night, and prisoners on the floor above complained of noise. If there was some form of purposeful activity available to them, it might help to alleviate this.

6.9 There have been nine occasions over the year when the special accommodation cell has been used – up from six in 2017–2018. The Board was properly informed each time, and the prisoners were promptly returned to a normal cell.

6.10 There were seven dirty protests by prisoners in 2018–2019. On each occasion a protective screen was placed in front of the cell and the prisoner was served a meal at the door. When the protest ended, the prisoner was given a shower and clean clothing and trained orderlies cleaned the cell.

6.11 The Board is pleased to note that the prison keeps records of the protected characteristics of prisoners in CSU to ensure that segregation is used fairly, and an investigation carried out by a governor found no evidence of over-representation of BAME prisoners. However, the Board is concerned at the number of prisoners who come to the CSU whilst on an ACCT – an average of 19 each quarter.

6.12 The second quarter of the prison year (July – September 2018) saw a significant increase in the number of adjudications, due to a change in strategy for dealing with PS users. A guilty finding not only awards additional days, it also forces prisoners to accept they have a problem and they have to address it to reduce their risks and achieve parole/home detention curfew (HDC)/category D etc. The Board notes that the number of outstanding and adjourned adjudications has decreased significantly.

7 Accommodation (including communication)

7.1 Communal areas on the residential wings are generally kept clean and tidy by prisoner cleaning and painting teams. Following the decency agenda, all empty cells and those on the induction wings are cleaned and essential items placed in the cells for new occupants by the Room Ready team.

7.2 The Board commends the farms and gardens department for its work in maintaining the outside garden areas to a high standard. However, the prison continues to be plagued by pigeons and rats in some outside areas. On the mainstream side, the wings have roof vents for ventilation; however when they are open bird droppings come in, as the pigeons congregate on the roof. This is neither decent nor sanitary. Weekly power-washing of the walkways has helped to keep the bird droppings to a minimum here. This year I wing has also had an infestation of mice.

7.3 At the end of the last reporting period, the Board reported that Wymott had been successful in gaining funding to refurbish A and B wings, and a start date of March 2019 was expected. However, this did not happen, and the Board understands that the project has been 'paused' and the funding used for essential boiler repairs. The infrastructure of A and B wings continues to be of grave concern, so much so that the Board has raised its concerns at local, regional and national levels:

- The heating system is inefficient and erratic.
 - The windows are single glazed and ill-fitting, so that in winter the cells are extremely cold.
 - Both wings have eight spurs, which all have open communal showers. Of the 32 showers on A wing, only two have a privacy curtain. This arrangement is not dignified for the prisoners.
 - The walls and trough areas in the showers are in need of repainting. Most of the showers are functioning, but there is reduced water pressure leading to showers with little force.
 - There is no in-cell sanitation on these wings. Three toilets on each spur are located in the shower area and there are two night toilets for each spur. Of the 24 day toilets, six (25%) are not flushing correctly. Again, this appears to be due to the low water pressure. The majority of the toilet seats on both wings are wooden, small crescent in shape, which are screwed into the toilet. These allow all types of dirt to accumulate under them, which is impossible to clean properly. Three toilets have no seats at all or not attached. Of the night toilets, several are difficult to flush and one has inadequate ventilation and so doesn't eliminate the smells. There is dripping of water from the first floor into the areas below, which means that tiles do not stay on the walls, water accumulates on the floor and the paint on some of the walls and ceilings is flaking off.
 - On B wing, the toilets have insufficient pressure to flush them and from the end of December until the end of May, several of the toilets needed to be flushed using buckets. This is neither dignified nor humane.
 - B wing has an older prisoner unit and the Board considers that these are not decent conditions for frail, elderly men.
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7.4 Maintenance work on these wings stalled whilst there was the possibility that there would be a refurbishment, leading to worsening conditions. It was also discovered that the

electrics and the water system were contained directly next to each other and it was deemed unsafe to work in that area. This added to the problems listed above. At the beginning of March 2019, Amey was commissioned to undertake repairs to all toilets and showers on A and B wings. At the end of the reporting period, the Board can report that conditions are slowly improving.

7.5 I wing (the care and reablement unit) now has six social care cells that can accommodate wheelchair using prisoners. These also have hospital-style beds. Not all of the showers on the wing have rails for the less stable prisoners, which has led to falls. One prisoner hit his head but did not report it initially as he 'didn't want to make a fuss'. The stairlift on this wing continues to fail periodically, meaning that some prisoners are unable to get up to the medicines hatch on the first floor.

7.6 Since the 2017 – 2018 report, J wing showers have been replaced.

7.7 On the mainstream side, although the showers are kept clean and tidy, the paint is flaking off walls and ceilings. Many of the doors are rotten on the shower side and in need of replacement. There is in-cell sanitation on these wings, but the toilets are not always screened off.

7.8 The kitchen caters for around 1150 prisoners in a kitchen designed for a much smaller number. Over 75% of IMB weekly reports stated that several pieces of equipment were out of action, some for long periods of time. The Board has been told that Amey outsources the work. These companies come out to assess the problems but often do not complete the job. There appear to be no checks that the repairs have actually been carried out.

7.9 The low number of prisoners working in the kitchen has been a serious ongoing issue throughout the year, at times becoming critical (see 10.7). This has led to occasional dips in the quality of food as a result of shortcuts being taken, for example no butter on sandwiches.

7.10 The food is generally sufficient and of a decent quality. Food service on the VP side is generally very good, all servers are correctly attired and portion control is consistent. On the mainstream side, wearing of protective clothing is not always enforced by officers. Hats and coats are sometimes put on after the appearance of the IMB. Utensils are not always used, for example, chips being served with gloved hands. This leads to inconsistent portion sizes. The Board has regularly raised this throughout the year.

7.11 There is a huge amount of food wastage. This goes directly from the wings to waste management so the kitchens are not always aware of the problem. Between 25 April and 16 May 2019, 10 tons of waste were awaiting collection. The Board has been informed that a new electronic food ordering system will be introduced later this year, and that should reduce waste significantly.

7.12 From 13 May, restricted weekend regimes, on a two-week cycle, were introduced due to a shortage of officers: one half-day lock-up one weekend and two half days on the second weekend. The Board is monitoring the impact of this on prisoners.

7.13 Loss of prisoners' property, both within Wymott and on transfer, remains a significant concern to prisoners and to the Board. Cell clearances were not always completed and recorded in a timely manner, and the Board has received an increased number of applications about property left behind at other prisons. On a positive note, the Board finds that the prison orderlies in reception are extremely organised and helpful.

8 Healthcare (including mental health and social care)

8.1 Although there have been significant improvements in healthcare provision, the Board remains concerned that it continues to fall below the statutory duty to provide a service of equivalent standard to that in the community in some areas.

8.2 A Care Quality Commission (CQC) report from July 2018 (published in December 2018) stated that 'the healthcare centre was small with insufficient treatment rooms to meet the needs of the prison population'. It also said that 'treatment rooms on wings and those located in the healthcare centre did not meet infection prevention standards'. Cleaning is contracted out to Amey and the prison has taken this up with them, but a follow-up visit by CQC has suggested that further work is needed.

8.3 Staffing has improved in primary healthcare and the pharmacy, but there are still shortfalls, which are particularly acute in the area of mental health. A new head of healthcare was appointed in the middle of the year.

8.4 Prisoners still complain of long delays in getting to see the dentist and other ancillary services, but they are generally satisfied with the standard of treatment they receive.

8.5 On a number of occasions nurse-led clinics have been late starting or cancelled with little or no notice, with the result that prisoners remained in overcrowded waiting areas for long periods of time. Prisoners were often not escorted back to their wings or workplaces in a timely manner.

8.6 The frequency of GP visits to the CSU has again failed to comply with the PS01700 requirement of at least every three days on several occasions, and the Board remains concerned that 'consultations' often take place through observation panels. Prisoners have claimed to be unaware who they were speaking to.

8.7 Although the distribution of medication has improved, there have been several times when prisoners with life-threatening conditions have had to wait: for example a diabetic had to wait three days for his insulin. Medication that is time bound has not always been delivered in a timely manner.

8.8 Problems with the issue of appointment slips highlighted in the last report have continued and prisoners report that either they do not receive these or they arrive after the time of the appointment.

8.9 During most of the reporting year it has been unclear who was responsible for answering prisoners' complaints about healthcare provision and thus there has been a lack of timely response and in some cases no response at all.

8.10 Staffing shortages in the mental health team (MHT) for several months have meant that there has been a backlog in the initial Well Man assessments. Currently there are only two permanent mental health nurses out of a complement of six. Although the backlog has now been cleared by the use of agency staff, this has had a knock-on effect on the provision of therapies for the needs identified.

8.11 The Board has seen an increase in the number of applications from prisoners waiting to be seen by the MHT. Overall, healthcare applications have almost doubled (42 in 2017 – 2018 compared to 81 in 2018 – 2019).

8.12 Inconsistency in the provision of carers has persisted. This has led to undue reliance on a buddy system whereby other prisoners provide assistance to the less able prisoners

(excluding personal care) and on prison officers, and to care plans not being fully implemented.

8.13 The presence of significant numbers of high dependency elderly and/or disabled prisoners on I wing has put unreasonable pressure on officers having to undertake caring activities beyond their role. There have been numerous occasions when they have had to help with moving and handling incontinent men, which they are not trained for and which takes them away from their duties with other prisoners. This wing houses prisoners with complex needs and those with 'do not resuscitate' instructions and end-of-life plans. These difficult cases leave prisoners in situations that are neither dignified nor humane. The situation also presents staff with challenges and the Board commends the work of officers in this area.

8.14 The Board is greatly concerned by the increased use of PS by prisoners. Treating the damaging effects of PS has put pressure on both healthcare and mental health services (see also 4.4). PS have taken the impact of substance misuse to another level.

8.15 Substance misuse services provided by Building Futures are overstretched and, with only one nurse and one support worker, cannot provide a seven-day service.

8.16 The Board is further concerned that the healthcare forum, which continues to be a model of good practice and which is fully supported by the Bridgewater NHS Trust, has been cancelled on several occasions over the latter part of the reporting period by the prison authorities with little or no notice to the participants.

9 Education and other purposeful activities

9.1 Recent changes in funding and a new education contract have created both opportunities and challenges. While the education department at Wymott strives to maintain a broad curriculum, there have been some staff reductions and several courses have been withdrawn, most notably level 3 IT courses. The Board has expressed some disappointment about this change but is satisfied that the education department is striving to continue to offer a dynamic and responsive curriculum that meets the needs of the prisoners.

9.2 Classroom attendance remains a challenge, with figures regularly failing to meet the target of 80% (the average for the reporting year is 71% compared to 77.3% in the last reporting year). This is largely due to prisoners attending other activities, for example Well Man sessions and gym sessions, or prioritising work over education.

9.3 The Board commends the Wymott Festival of Learning in June 2018, which was an excellent opportunity to showcase and celebrate the work of the education department. The event included moving accounts from several ex-prisoners citing the positive impact that education had made on their rehabilitation.

9.4 The HMP Wymott learner engagement strategy is now in its second year of implementation and objectives are being achieved. The annual 'learner voice' survey is organised by a very effective student council, which is chaired by the education orderly and held in high regard by the education department. In the 2018 survey, 96% of respondents indicated that the teaching on their course was at least good.

9.5 The student council has produced an admirable set of peer-to-peer basic maths books that are designed for use with prisoners who struggle with basic numeracy. This complements the Shannon Trust Turning Pages programme and incorporates a range of practical and relevant activities designed for use within the peer mentoring scheme.

9.6 In June 2018, Wymott mandated functional skills to level 1 in English and maths for all prisoners apart from those who can evidence that they have already achieved this, either through certification or qualifications at a higher level. A series of functional skills pods has been running in the workshops for those prisoners who wish to continue in work and these have run very successfully. It was estimated in February 2018 that 30%-40% of prisoners had not achieved level 1 in English and maths, while in September 2018 it was reported that 85% of prisoners had achieved level 1 in literacy and 75% had achieved level 1 in numeracy. The Board welcomes plans to include functional skills in IT once the infrastructure is in place to support this.

9.7 Family work is held in high regard, both internally and outside Wymott. The family pathway course is proving to be particularly successful in helping prisoners to recognise their value and responsibility as parents and influencers of young people. This course has been developed in partnership with the OMU to complement sentence plans and culminates in a showcase presentation to an invited audience and a family day at which participating prisoners can present the portfolios they have created as part of their assessment to their families. Several members of the Board have attended family days and been impressed with the planning and organisation and the obvious impact on prisoners and their families. The prison also runs an innovative monthly homework club for prisoners to help their children that receives high praise.

9.8 The number of prisoners participating in award-bearing courses has increased over the past three years, and there is a predicted success rate this year of 97%. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the Board has observed teaching sessions to be engaging and relevant.

9.9 There are plans to increase delivery of educational programmes by offering Saturday morning sessions, beginning with a pilot offering enrichment activities and recreational workshops for prisoners on the care and reablement wing. Prisoners on this wing are also offered appropriate activities in the gymnasium and a walking group is in the process of being set up. The very popular CAMEO centre, run by the Salvation Army, also offers a range of craft and leisure activities. The Board commends the work the prison is doing in providing meaningful activity for older prisoners.

10 Work, vocational training and employment

10.1 In October 2018, Wymott recorded a total of 1235 activity places, of which over 500 were in workshops, with 261 in other occupations and 265 in education/training; the total activity places also included 196 prisoners who were retired, unfit, unemployed, dismissed, unallocated or in the CSU. Only 48 prisoners were recorded as refusing work. There are sufficient education and training places for all prisoners.

10.2 In its 2017 – 2018 report the Board expressed concern about the number of unoccupied men remaining on the residential wings during the day, particularly on the mainstream side of the prison. The Board is pleased to note that Wymott has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to address this issue, including:

- screening of prisoners who self-isolate by the safer living team
- plans to offer in-cell educational provision for self-isolating men – while not being paid for this, they will receive any bonuses for successful completions
- appointment of an activities and resettlement manager, whose role includes engaging with those prisoners who are refusing work and education
- improvements in the dispensing of medication, which previously resulted in prisoners being delayed on the wing and consequently missing labour movements
- a more rigorous approach to managing non-attendance, including tracking prisoners who are not required at work
- introduction of an emergency first aid course for men on the wing who are not working

10.3 Wymott's target of 80% for hours worked in industry was reported in September 2018 as not being met month-on-month. The Board is pleased to note that there have been some improvements in this figure over the latter part of the reporting year, primarily as a result of a clear strategy and concerted effort by the head of reducing offending and his team. Over the 12 months of the reporting period, the average hours worked in industry has exceeded 80%, with notable improvements over more recent months.

10.4 A particular challenge has been the lack of contingency planning in workshops, so that when supervisors are sick, on leave or training there is no cover and either sessions are cancelled or supervisors oversee additional prisoner numbers. This has resulted in sessions not being available to prisoners. The Board hopes that changes to the way that workshop staffing is funded may resolve this issue, although attracting appropriately qualified staff to Wymott continues to be a challenge.

10.5 There have been ongoing problems with the roof in the VP workshops, where the ingress of water compromises expensive machinery and on some occasions has resulted in the closure of a workshop. There have also been problems with heating, particularly over the winter period. The repair work that was anticipated has not yet taken place and it appears unlikely that a major refurbishment will be undertaken. The Board is disappointed about this and continues to monitor the situation, particularly where workshops are closed and work is lost.

10.6 Feedback from prisoners identified a perceived lack of variety of employment for those on the mainstream side of the prison and an imbalance in the number of places in industry. Wymott has responded to this by changing the designation of the vocational training centre (VTC) from VP prisoners to mainstream prisoners for an initial two-year period. The Board is pleased to note that after a slow initial transition period, numbers have increased and prisoners report positively on their experiences.

10.7 There have been some difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitable prisoners to work in the kitchen. Approximately 50% of the prisoners are not employed on a full-time basis, with many attending education. There is a high turnover of workers. Prisoners complain that pay does not reflect the fact that they work weekends and bank holidays, which others do not.

10.8 Recent scrutiny by the chamber of commerce confirmed that the qualifications offered in the workshops are relevant to the employment needs and opportunities in the region, with engineering being particularly valuable. The Board is pleased to see the promotion of employment opportunities through, for example, posters and information boards in the workshops, employer engagement months and details of local employment opportunities.

10.9 One new initiative this year has been the employer engagement calendar, in which local employers are invited into Wymott to visit one of the workshop or VTC areas, view the qualifications offered and meet the prisoners working in the respective areas. This has proved to be a particularly successful innovation, with several employers agreeing to make further visits. The Board commends this important link with local employers.

10.10 The Board welcomes the recent introduction of the construction skills certification scheme, with 60 prisoners involved to date. This new development enhances the employability of prisoners wishing to work in the construction industry on release.

10.11 The Board is particularly pleased to support the Jailhouse Crop shop which stocks many items made by prisoners, most notably in the tailors, printshop, joinery and engineering workshops, as well as produce from the farms and gardens. This provides a positive image to the public of the work done by prisoners and showcases a range of skills.

10.12 Recent changes to funding, including the new dynamic purchasing system, have enabled Wymott to develop its range of vocational opportunities. Plans are in place to offer warehousing and forklift truck driving, a computer aided design (CAD) course up to level 2 and a WAMITAB qualification in waste management. This will result in all areas offering qualifications, a development that is welcomed by the Board.

11 Resettlement preparation

11.1 An average of 25 prisoners per month have continued to be released from Wymott during 2018 – 2019. Following comments in last year's IMB report, the prison has recently set up a preparation for release service for prisoners, starting eight months prior to release, to discuss accommodation, finance and other needs. The Board welcomes this and will monitor its progress. Resources have also been provided for additional support from the community rehabilitation company (CRC).

11.2 Although the backlog in OMU is reducing, progress is slow, and prisoners are still reporting to the IMB that they do not know who their offender supervisor is or what is in their sentence plan, and they feel unable to progress. Around 30 prisoners currently have no offender assessment system (OASys) document and the reducing reoffending committee minutes of April 2019 noted that 20% of prisoners do not have an up-to-date document. This is of particular concern to those who are due a re-categorisation review or parole hearing.

11.3 The key worker scheme at Wymott is well behind target, and prisoners frequently complain that they do not know who their key worker is or have not seen them for several weeks.

11.4 A programmes manager told the IMB that some prisoners still arrived at Wymott for offending behaviour programmes that were either not offered at Wymott or that they were subsequently assessed as unsuitable for. This can result in a prisoner being stranded a long way from home and losing family contact.

11.5 Pressures on the population of the prison estate generally and under-staffing of the prisoner transfer unit at Wymott result in long waits for prisoners needing to move to more suitable establishments to complete their sentence.

11.6 The number of indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) prisoners and lifers has reduced only marginally from last year. In May 2019, Wymott held 130 IPPs (down from 136), and 141 lifers (down from 148). It remains difficult for these prisoners to progress, which impacts upon their motivation to engage with rehabilitation.

11.7 The prison has started work on mapping external and internal business links to build up a database of work placements for prisoners on release. Employers are being invited in to see the workshops and speak to prisoners (see 10.8). The Board welcomes this initiative and will follow its progress.

11.8 The family project worker has introduced a number of activities that are welcomed by prisoners, such as a homework club for men who have completed the family pathway course, more family days and visits from a PAT dog for men with no social ties. The Board commends these developments.

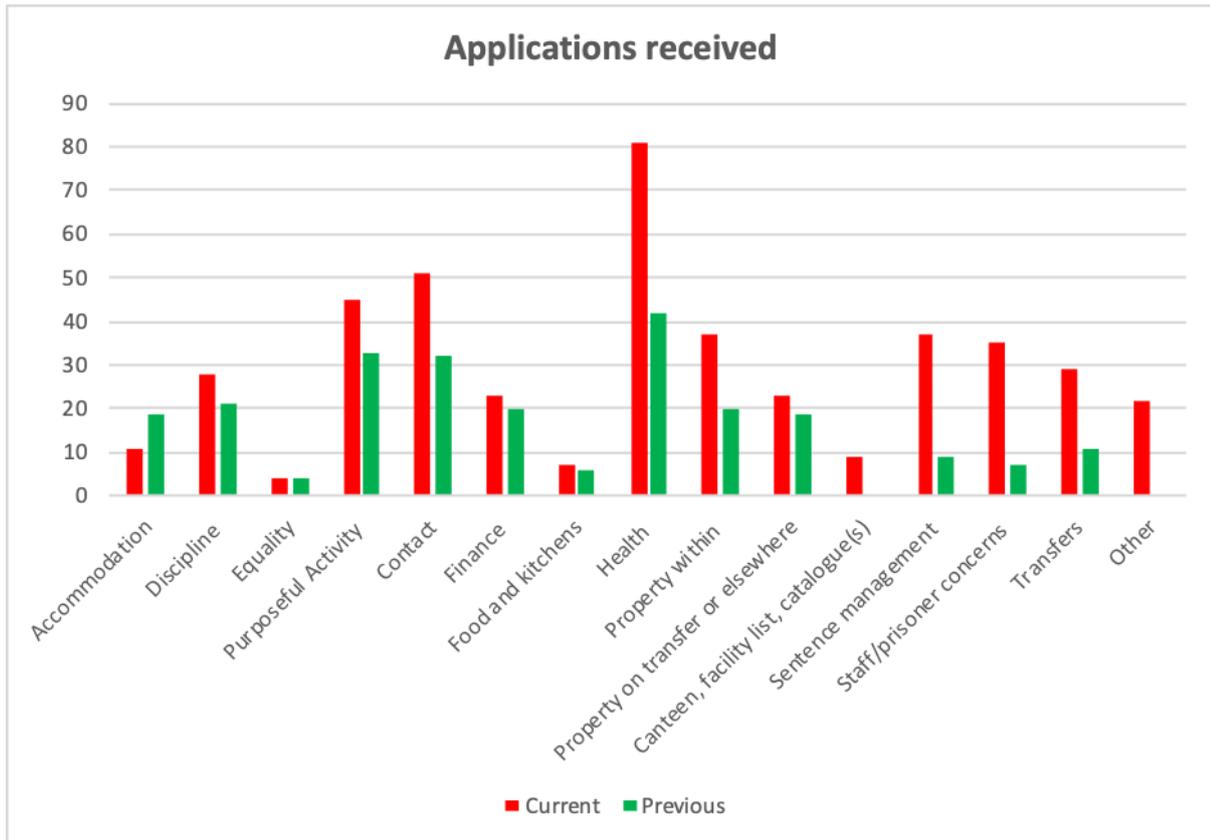
C – Section: The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

- During the reporting period one experienced member and two probationers left the Board. The Board carried out a recruitment campaign in the spring and recruited two new members who joined the Board as probationers in May 2019. Each has been allocated a mentor to support their learning and development.
- The Board has been able to meet its commitment to monitoring duties on a rota basis even though below a fully active membership. Issues of concern and good practice have been shared with other members through weekly rota reports. Prior to each monthly Board meeting, the Chair presents these issues to the governor. The governor continues to be active in following up the issues raised and reporting back to the Board at the full Board meeting. The Board is appreciative of this and other information about the activities and operation of the prison provided by the governor at each meeting. Important issues raised during the Board meeting are noted and followed up by members during subsequent rota visits.
- Board members have continued to deal with applications from individual prisoners on a rota basis. Issues are investigated and responses, which may be verbal and written, have been provided promptly.
- For annual reporting purposes each member of the Board (except any member in their probationary year) is allocated to at least one specialist monitoring area. This improves the Board's overall knowledge and depth of monitoring. In addition, Board development is supported by regular pre-Board meetings at which either aspects of the Board's development work are discussed or talks provided by members of prison staff on their area of work. These meetings may also be used to discuss other Board issues of concern.
- The Board makes every effort to attend all reviews of prisoners held in segregation under prison rule 45. There is an agreement with the prison that, where possible, rule 45 reviews, other than the initial 72-hour review, occur on Wednesday afternoons allowing the Board to attend reviews as part of a normal weekly rota. The Board maintains its own record of individual reviews and is thus able to have a continuous overview of each prisoner held under rule 45. The Board also attends a sample of internal and independent adjudications and has attended several incidents as observers.
- During the year Board members have also attended, as observers, a range of prison meetings to extend their depth of monitoring and to inform themselves of events and changes. A Board representative has also been present at a number of other staff and prisoner events over the reporting year.

Board statistics	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	460
Total number of segregation reviews attended	321

D – Section: Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	11	19
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	28	21
C	Equality	4	4
D	Purposeful activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	45	33
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	51	32
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	23	20
F	Food and kitchens	7	6
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	81	42
H 1	Property within this establishment	37	20
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	23	19
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	9	
I	Sentence management including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	37	9
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	35	7
K	Transfers	29	11
	Other	22	
	Total number of IMB applications	442	274



Prisoners on VP wings accounted for 198, or 45% of the applications, while prisoners on mainstream wings accounted for 202, or 46% of the applications. The remaining 9% came from prisoners located in the CSU. The ratio of VP to mainstream category C prisoners at Wymott is approximately 60:40.

The Board notes that there has been an increase in applications during the reporting year of 61% over the previous year. While there may be several reasons for this increase, it was noted by the Board that on a regular basis the number of outstanding prisoner complaint forms at Wymott is at least 30 and prisoners are known to contact the IMB when they have not received a timely response to a complaint.

It was also noted that several prisoners submitted multiple applications; 10 men submitted at least five applications during their time at Wymott while, of those, four men submitted 10 or more applications.

The number of applications relating to accommodation has fallen by 42%, despite the issues concerning A and B residential blocks (7.3), and the overall number of such applications is small; however, members of the Board are approached on a regular basis by individuals and groups of prisoners concerned about living conditions in these blocks.

The number of healthcare-related applications has almost doubled, and this remains the area about which prisoners have most frequently contacted the Board.

Glossary

ACCT	assessment, care in custody and teamwork (case management for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm). (Also, assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management documents or reviews)
BAME	black and minority ethnic
CAMEO	come and meet each other, a service for older prisoners provided in Wymott by the Salvation Army
category C	prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions who do not have the will or resources to make a determined escape attempt
CNA	certified normal accommodation – the normal capacity of a prison
CQC	Care Quality Commission – England’s independent regulator of health and social care
CRCs	community rehabilitation companies, which provide probation and resettlement services
CSIP	challenge, support and intervention plan – a de-escalation and restraint technique
CSU	care and separation unit – also known as the segregation unit
DIRF	discrimination incident reporting form – which prisoners use to submit complaints about discrimination
GOOD	good order and/or discipline – rule under which a prisoner can be segregated
HMP	Her Majesty’s Prison
HMPPS	Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service
IT	information technology

IEP	incentives and earned privileges – a scheme designed to promote good behaviour and challenge misbehaviour
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
induction	a programme all prisoners should undergo when they enter prison
IPP	indeterminate sentence for public protection
key worker	prison officer given responsibility for supporting a small number of prisoners under the OMiC scheme
Listeners	prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners
MHT	mental health team
OASys	offender assessment system – which assesses a prisoner’s likelihood of reoffending and their risk of harm to others
OBP	offending behaviour programme – designed to address prisoners’ offending behaviour
OMiC	offender management in custody, which involves providing prisoners with key workers
OMU	offender management unit
OpCap	the operational capacity of a prison
PAT dog	Pets as Therapy dog, which helps enhance health and wellbeing
PEEP	personal emergency evacuation plan (for prisoners with mobility problems)
PIPE	psychologically informed planned environment – special units in prisons and approved premises where NHS clinicians provide staff training and psychological input to help manage offenders with a suspected personality disorder

PPO	Prisons and Probation Ombudsman – a body that carries out independent investigations into deaths and complaints in custody
PS	psychoactive substances – chemical substances that act on the central nervous system to alter brain function
PSI	Prison Service instruction – a prison rule, regulation or guideline
PSO	Prison Service order – prison rule, regulation or guideline which remains in force until it is replaced by a Prison Service Policy Framework
rule 45	rule under which a prisoner is segregated for their own protection or to maintain the good order and discipline of the prison
segregation unit	for prisoners who are disruptive or who require protection
Turning Pages	a reading programme for adults delivered by peer mentors
VP	vulnerable prisoner