



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

**HMP Stafford**

for reporting year  
**1 May 2018 to 30 April 2019**

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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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## A Introductory sections 1 – 3

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### **1. Statutory role of the Independent Monitoring Board**

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1. 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.
  - 1.1. The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is specifically charged to:
    - 1.2. 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
    - 1.3. inform promptly the secretary of state, or any official to whom they have delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
    - 1.4. 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
2. 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.
3. The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a 'National Preventive Mechanism' to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations regarding the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 2. Executive summary

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### Introduction to the report

This report presents the findings of the IMB at HMP Stafford for the period 1 May 2018 to 30 April 2019. The IMB's evidence comes from observations made on 470 visits, the scrutiny of prison records, reports and data, plus conversations with prisoners and staff, IMB attendance at meetings and dealing with applications from prisoners raising individual or general grievances.

### Main judgements

The IMB is agreed that HMP Stafford provides a safe, decent and humane environment for the around 750 prisoners detained there. The prison is well led by the Governor through his senior leadership team (SLT), all of whom share the common purpose outlined in their vision of 'returning citizens not offenders to the community'. A dedicated, stable staff team also contributes to the success of Stafford.

**Are prisoners treated fairly?** Those detained at Stafford are treated fairly. The Governor and his team seek to consult, wherever possible, on issues with prisoners, thereby increasing engagement. Random monitoring of prisoner complaints shows that the majority are dealt with in a timely way and received a fair response. The introduction of key workers under the offender management in custody model has been, in the main, positively received by prisoners and is clearly being used by them as another way to seek information and ensure that their treatment is fair.

**Are prisoners treated humanely?** The Board believes that prisoners at Stafford are treated humanely, as further evidenced by the recent Monitoring Quality of Prison Life survey's high score for safety, when a significant number of prisoners agreed that they felt safe. Staff-prisoner relationships are good and the continued focus on respect and trust further enhances this.

**Are prisoners prepared well for their release?** HMP Stafford is not a resettlement prison and is not resourced as such. Every month prisoners are released from the prison and the Board believes that the Governor and his team do all within the available resources to prepare them for what they would face.

### Conclusion

We commend the Governor and his team on the achievements they made during the reporting period, especially as this was the first IMB report issued under the current Governor's leadership.

## **Main areas for development**

### ***To the Minister***

Will the Minister review:

- The continued failure of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to address the ongoing issue of prisoner property losses during transfer between establishments, which remains a huge frustration and will undoubtedly have meant a substantial amount in compensation. Despite many reassurances that HMPPS was looking at this issue, positive progress was not seen at HMP Stafford by the Board (see page 8, 4.3).

### ***To HMPPS***

Will HMPPS review:

- The approach to rolling out national initiatives, specifically Pava spray (an incapacitant) and the impact this may have on prisoners in a well-run, safe establishment. If prisoners observe officers further equipped to deal with disorder in HMP Stafford, this may have a detrimental impact on the positive culture that the Governor has sought to create. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach may not be helpful, and the Board would wish for a more individualised approach from HMPPS to different prisons (see page 9, 4.14).
- The speed at which phones in cells are rolled out nationally. As a safe and secure establishment, HMP Stafford will no doubt not be a priority in this roll out, effectively punishing prisoners for good behaviour. The provision of phones in cells for men in prisons that are a national resource is even more important as they are often held a distance from families and friends (see page 12, 7.3).
- The budget available to the Governor for prisoner pay to ensure that it recognises that HMP Stafford, once again, achieved a high level of employment/education attendance amongst its population yet often cannot match the pay rates offered in private prisons. This is the second year that the Board has noted this issue (see page 19, 10.9).
- The fact that the model for transferring men convicted of sexual offences to resettlement prisons for the final part of their sentence does not work. HMP Stafford continues to release prisoners every month, despite not being resourced as a resettlement prison. Furthermore, as a national resource, moving prisoners to their resettlement prison closer to home, often at a considerable distance, does not work. Transport for individual prisoners to resettlement prisons is often refused due to the distance a partially-empty prison transport van has to travel (see page 20, 11.1).

- The fact that the creation of a regional social care facility at HMP Stafford has been in the planning for two years and there is no indication as to when work will start. This is an essential facility that prevents elderly, frail prisoners, often with mental health issues, from being held in an inappropriate location. Fifty-six percent of the population at HMP Stafford is over the age of 50 (see page 14, 8.5).

### ***To the Prison***

Will the Governor:

- Continue to explore opportunities that will enhance freeflow and expand the trust placed in prisoners. This would result in a further move away from the view of some prisoners that HMP Stafford has a category B 'feel' (see page 8, 4.5).
- Utilise the recent review of the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme and the Governor's local autonomy to ensure that the scheme rewards those prisoners in HMP Stafford who are totally engaged in the rehabilitative culture and often make a real difference to their peers (see page 17, 9.14).
- Continue to review the supervision of medication queues to ensure that older and vulnerable prisoners are protected from bullying (see page 15, 8.9).

## **Improvements from the 2017 – 2018 IMB annual report**

- The Board is pleased to learn of the release on temporary licence (ROTL) review and the resulting inclusion of low-risk prisoners who have committed sexual offences for ROTL consideration. This will undoubtedly assist in preparation for release and improve chances for employment and reintegration into communities.
- The ongoing trial of 24/7 nursing provision has been welcomed by the Board. Prisoners who become unwell in the night have the chance to be reviewed by a trained nurse on site, rather than being taken directly to hospital or relying upon the on-call GP service to give telephone advice to prison staff. The 24/7 nursing provision undoubtedly reduces the need for prison staff to perform escorting duties during the night and allows them to continue their role on site.
- The Board is pleased to learn of a release on compassionate grounds in late 2018. Having been critical of the process in our last report, we are reassured by the progress of this specific case and hope that such applications will continue to be positively addressed by the prison and others, in the appropriate circumstances. During the reporting period, the Board was aware of several compassionate decisions made by the governor and his team regarding prisoners' attendance at funerals and time spent with critically ill relatives.
- Improved freeflow saw the opening of more gates and a trusting approach to prisoners who move freely to medical and other appointments during the day.
- A full review of prisoner pay rates took place in 2018 and the Board is encouraged to see that prisoners, through the prisoner council, were consulted fully on this matter. Some anomalies were addressed and positively, some prisoners saw an increase in their pay. A further review was due to take place in August 2019. It should be noted, however, that comparisons to other prisons often result in complaints from prisoners, who find rates to be lower at HMP Stafford.
- New opportunities for purposeful activity have been introduced during the reporting period. Rail maintenance, tyre services, additional industry contracts, the introduction of bee-keeping and planned introduction of goat-keeping, all offer skills that will help prepare prisoners for release.
- The Governor created, unfunded, the appointment of a head of social care and safeguarding to focus on the needs of a large portion of the prison population who are elderly, frail and have significant requirements in relation to their physical, mental and social care needs. The post strengthened partnerships with the healthcare department, the local authority and other agencies.

- Whilst it was not specifically mentioned in the 2018-2019 report, the introduction of key workers under the offender management in custody model (OMiC) has been, in the main, positively received by prisoners and is clearly being used by them as another way to seek information and ensure that their treatment is fair.

### **3. Description of the establishment**

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3.1 HMP Stafford is a category C, adult male national resource for prisoners who have committed sexual offences, with a certified normal accommodation of 751. On 30 April 2019, 747 prisoners convicted of sexual offences were held in Stafford. Located near Stafford town centre, it is the second oldest prison in the country and includes many Grade II listed buildings.

3.2 The prison includes seven residential wings, one of which is used for induction and accommodates the healthcare centre, with the support and separation unit (SSU) located on the floor below. Each wing has in-cell sanitation and a shower block; in-cell showers are only available on one residential wing. Most cells accommodate two prisoners.

3.3 A Portakabin for older prisoners (+50 years), called Brookside Cabin, provides activities for older prisoners, as well as facilities for relaxation and socialising. A garden, seating and space for outdoor activities is adjacent to Brookside Cabin.

3.4 On 30 April 2019, the full-time equivalent staff number was 312.80, including uniformed and non-uniformed staff, 25.8 more than the previous year.

3.5 Healthcare facilities are provided by Care UK, education services by Novus, which took over the contract 11 months into in the reporting period, with library services provided by Staffordshire County Council. Transport for prisoners is provided by GeoAmey and canteen by DHL.

3.6 Significant workshop space is provided to meet the needs of a high level of employment. A programmes team on site provides a range of interventions for prisoners to help meet their identified needs in terms of rehabilitation and reducing their risk of reoffending.

3.7 There are many voluntary organisations supporting the prisoners, including the Samaritans (support and training for Listeners), Barnardo's (running the visitors' centre), Lincolnshire Action Trust (resettlement support) and the Shannon Trust (offering the reading plan Turning Pages). official prison visitors, chaplaincy volunteers and refreshment provision in the visitors' centre by Friends of Stafford Prison.



## B Evidence sections 4 – 11

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### 4. Safety

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4.1 The Board believes that prisoners and staff benefited from a calm, safe environment during the reporting year. This was evidenced by use of force incidents being maintained at the relatively low level of 66 against 54 the previous year. Batons were not used on any of these occasions. Very positively, assaults on staff were reduced from 19 to only 3, whilst the number of assaults by prisoners on prisoners was 51, well below the national average, though an increase on the previous year of 19. The Board does not believe that the increased numbers show a less safe environment. The increase in assaults by prisoner on prisoner is attributable to a small group of younger prisoners who are responsible for more than one assault in the reporting period.

4.2 Prisoners arriving at HMP Stafford from other establishments commented favourably on the warm welcome they received from staff and prisoners in reception. Some were pleasantly surprised by this and stated that it helped them to settle into the prison.

4.3 Once more, several induction prisoners complained about some of their property not arriving from their previous prison. As reported last year, the Board is frustrated at rarely being able to resolve this issue.

4.4 As part of our monitoring responsibilities, the Board regularly follows up the induction process by interviewing a small number of prisoners about three months after their arrival. Most of their responses were very positive and it is encouraging to learn that most felt safe and were settling in well.

4.5 Feedback from some prisoners show that they feel that HMP Stafford is run more like a category B prison, despite the progress that has been made with, for example, freeflow. Their comments appear to be more about the approach of some officers and resulted in questions to and actions taken by the Governor.

4.6 The incidence of self-harm increased by over 50% during the reporting year, but at 134 remained relatively low compared with similar prisons and against the national average. Almost 85% of these incidents involved cutting, mainly by a small number of prisoners who repeated their actions, e.g. 2 prisoners were responsible for 59 events, which is 44%. The Board is satisfied that the prison uses the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) process (for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm) appropriately on these occasions to ensure the safety of prisoners.

4.7 Positive results from mandatory drug testing remained at six, as last year. The Board is more than satisfied with these results, which reinforces its belief in the safety of the prison.

4.8 The number of self-isolating prisoners varied during the year from none to a maximum of three. Those who were identified by the safer custody team and

Listeners were assisted to occasionally leave their cells or at least to talk with other prisoners. One prisoner self-isolated by refusing to leave the SSU. An exit plan has been put in place to try and assist him.

4.9 There were three deaths in custody during the reporting year. Like the six deaths the previous year, all were thought to have been a result of natural causes. Only one inquest has taken place, and all three recommendations by the Coroner were implemented at the time of reporting, one for the Governor and two for the healthcare department.

4.10 HMP Stafford benefits from a relatively high number of Listeners, well above the recommended 1:50 ratio. Listeners play a valuable role in promoting the safety of prisoners. Monthly statistics of their work demonstrated that, after the Listeners became more proactive in instigating informal contact, there was a noticeable drop in the need for longer, more formal sessions.

4.11 During the year, 177 ACCT documents were opened, some for the same prisoner more than once. This compared to 139 in 2017–2018. ACCTs were checked for quality assurance by the Board and any shortcomings discussed with staff. The safer custody governor also monitors the documents, endeavouring to maintain consistently high standards. HMP Stafford is a trial site for a new ACCT document and the Board received concerns from staff about the complexity of this. The Board encouraged staff to feed back their concerns.

4.12 With the proven link between improving mental health and animal keeping, the Board welcomes the arrival of bees, and the planned arrival of goats and chickens. Prisoners who are on open ACCTs are encouraged to visit and engage with the animals as part of their recovery.

4.13 Safeguarding training is delivered by the Samaritans to the Listeners and also to the safer custody team. It is designed to ensure that staff and Listeners can recognise when a supported prisoner is at risk of serious harm so that they can help the individual explore how he may keep himself from harm. The Board commends the Samaritans for the excellent support they give to prisoners at HMP Stafford. In recognition of this support, the Listeners held a fund-raising event, which resulted in an impressive donation of £1,000 to the Samaritans.

4.14 The Board is concerned about the national roll out of Pava (incapacitant) spray in HMP Stafford, a stable, safe, well-run establishment that experiences a very minimal level of violence. The Governor and his team create a positive culture of pride and respect, based on effective relationships between prisoners and staff. If prisoners observe officers further equipped to deal with disorder in HMP Stafford, this may have a detrimental impact on this positive culture that the Governor has created. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach may not be helpful, and the Board wishes for a more individualised approach from HMPPS.

## **5. Equality and fairness**

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5.1 Staff at HMP Stafford continue to demonstrate a proactive, inclusive approach to equality and fairness.

5.2 The equality action group meets monthly and the Board often attends in a monitoring capacity. Meetings are chaired at governor level and are well attended, with prisoner representation from all residential wings. Senior staff lead on individual protected characteristics and provide updates to the meeting.

5.3 Towards the end of the reporting year an equality project manager was appointed for a six-month period to assist strand leads. The Board will monitor the impact of this appointment and report accordingly.

5.4 Analysis of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) does not indicate an adverse trend of discrimination or harassment against any particular group.

5.5 All DIRFs are monitored by the Board after a quality assurance check by the deputy governor. The Board finds that all were answered within the agreed time scale and complainants are visited to discuss outcomes if they wish. The deputy governor completed a quality assurance process, which was regarded as best practice by the Prison Reform Trust.

5.6 DIRF investigations rose from 41 to 44 during the reporting period, of which 18 were proven and resolved appropriately. Complaints about race were highest at 20. Analysis shows that this is often due to 'throw-away' remarks between prisoners.

5.7 All victims of discrimination are supported by equality representatives who have received appropriate training. These representatives also offer guidance to their peers on the DIRF process.

5.8 A recently published quality of life satisfaction study undertaken by Nottingham Trent University Psychology Department, contained in the quarterly Equalities Report, said that a sample of black and ethnic minority prisoners reported positively on the quality of life in HMP Stafford and felt safe in the establishment.

5.9 Following training, staff are encouraged to challenge remarks considered inappropriate and to use the IEP scheme and the mediation process to modify the behaviour of prisoners.

5.10 Five prisoners identify themselves as transgender. HMP Stafford works effectively to support this group. LGBT meetings are regularly held, and a Transgender Visibility Awareness Day was well received.

5.11 Cultural events organised included Black History Month and LGBT event.

5.12 Older prisoners (aged 50+) total 56% of the prison population, with 79 prisoners aged over 70. Whilst the age of the building does not allow for the addition of sufficient lifts or other mobility aids across all residential wings, the prison seeks to accommodate elderly residents in appropriate locations wherever possible. However, opportunities on the ground floor (or equivalent) remain limited. The provision of Brookside Cabin for residents over 50 and the activity and access associated with it proved popular.

## **6. Segregation/support and separation unit (SSU)**

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6.1 The Board is notified of each new arrival in the SSU, which enables a member of the IMB to visit the prisoner within 72 hours, and very often within 24 hours.

6.2 The Board notes that the SSU continues to be well-kept, clean and tidy.

6.3 During the reporting period, the SSU has been staffed by experienced officers who show skill and care when dealing with prisoners, some of whom are testing and time consuming.

6.4 The Board monitored the SSU through rota duties and regular ad-hoc visits. Through discussion with prisoners, the Board is satisfied with the concern, regard and humane treatment shown by the SSU officers and visiting governors.

6.5 The Board continues to be able to monitor rule 45 (prisoners in segregation for good order or discipline) boards and adjudications. This was made easier through the prison's accommodation of setting the rule 45 hearings on the same day each week where possible and notifying the IMB of rule 45 (72 hour) boards when applicable. Where the Board felt it was necessary, members were able to give feedback to governors on these processes.

6.6 During the year, five prisoners entered the SSU whilst on an open ACCT. All were returned to the wing within 24 hours.

6.7 Through monitoring, the Board is satisfied that the duty governor, chaplaincy and healthcare staff visit the SSU each day and speak to prisoners held there.

6.8 There were three prisoners who accounted for long periods of stay in the unit; one stayed for 199 days, one for 171 and one for 93 days. These cases were signed off by the prison group director (PGD) from the West Midlands regional office and the IMB was able to talk to the deputy director of custody about one particular case. The Board is reassured that the PGD was satisfied, in this particular case, that the prisoner was being treated appropriately.

6.9 During the year, there were four transfers out of the SSU to other establishments, all resulting from re-categorisation.

## **7. Accommodation (including communication)**

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7.1 Throughout the year, the cleanliness and high standards of the establishment were regularly reported in the Board rota reports. The wings are maintained to a very high standard, and walkways and surrounds are tidy, with neatly kept gardens throughout the establishment. The prisoner painting party should be commended on its efforts to ensure that the wings look well kept.

7.2 Notice boards are regularly monitored and found to be informative and up to date. In addition to the notice boards, the prisoner information desks (PIDs), located on each wing are found to be a good source of information. The Board is encouraged by the plans to provide internal phones on these desks in the very near future. PID ambassadors give prisoners the opportunity to play a responsible role, providing support to their peers. The enthusiasm of this specific group is commended by the Board.

7.3 The Board is aware of the national roll out of in-cell phones and regularly asked the governor for an update. As a national resource, with many men held a significant distance from home, contact with their family and friends is often only via the telephone. Whilst there are phones on each wing, they become very busy during association and prisoners may not get an opportunity to make their planned call. The Board hopes therefore that HMP Stafford and prisons like it may be prioritised within the programme.

7.4 When areas of concern are highlighted and reported on by the Board (ie via rota visits) they are often swiftly remedied or answered by the head of residence. One area of concern for the Board continues to be the provision of chairs with arms to aid the mobility of elderly residents, who find it difficult to get up from the armless chairs in the cells. The Board recognises that this issue remains on the residence and healthcare agendas, however a solution needs to be found to ensure safety and the humane treatment of frail prisoners.

7.5 The findings of the Board are supported by the prison receiving 'green' in an external living conditions audit carried out by HMPPS. Furthermore only 10% of applications made to the establishment (and 5% of applications to the IMB) relate to accommodation.

7.6 The Board has not received any applications relating to the food or kitchens throughout the reporting period. This reflects the findings documented in the rota reports, that generally food is of a good standard and served in a timely manner. The Board regularly receives positive comments from new inductees relating to the food. Every wing has a food comments book that is regularly reviewed by the catering manager and at catering meetings. A five-star rating by the local environmental health department for the kitchens supported the Board's positive findings.

7.7 The kitchen should be commended for the food that it produces for celebrations and religious events. The Board saw thank you letters and cards

regarding how the kitchen dealt with Ramadan, which included the employment of prisoners with skills in preparing the relevant food for this important period.

7.8 Authorisation for a refurbishment of the visitors' centre, where family members and friends wait prior to a visit, has been granted, and work started in early 2019. Despite delays in this work, whilst the visitors' centre was closed the prison took steps to ensure the humane treatment of visitors with early access to the visits hall. This means that visitors do not have to queue on the pavement outside the prison with all the risks associated with this e.g. public disapprobation.

7.9 Additionally, the visits hall underwent a full refurbishment. The area has new furniture and new flooring. This has created a much warmer, relaxed atmosphere, which has been commented on by prisoners and visitors alike.

7.10 Additionally, a biometrics system has been introduced for visitors. It provides extra security for the establishment and makes the booking in of visitors much smoother and swifter.

7.11 There are regular family visits days, with a number of activities for all members of the family. As part of the Talent Unlocked programme, groups of prisoners provided musical entertainment during such visits.

7.12 Clothes at Stafford Prison (CASP) continued to operate successfully, with the profits going to Katherine House Hospice. It provides prisoners with the opportunity to purchase clothing, games and jigsaws. During the reporting year a total of £13,448 was sent to the charity.

7.13 The Board welcomes the introduction of a one-off birthday spend for prisoners. This allows prisoners to take money from their private cash to make a canteen purchase of over £25 during the month of their birthday. The initiative encourages positive behaviour aligned to the IEP scheme. Those on the basic level are not involved in the initiative, those on the standard level can spend up to £75 and those on the enhanced regime, up to £100.

## **8. Healthcare (including mental health and social care)**

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8.1 The healthcare service in HMP Stafford is provided by Care UK. In general, this is working well as evidenced by the details below.

8.2 Waiting times in most areas are acceptable and in line with those in the community. The Board found that:

- Owing to the absence of the dental technician, waiting lists have increased, but were brought back under control at the end of the reporting period.
- Ophthalmic services, following the Health Fair in January 2019, have seen an increase in the number of prisoners requesting eye tests, but, by providing two extra sessions, services are expected to be back on target in the early part of the next reporting period.

- Physiotherapy continues to be a problem. This is not unexpected with the ageing population and waiting time figures have substantially increased at the end of the reporting period. Plans are in place to reduce these significantly by the end of the first month of the next reporting period.
- Five nurses and other healthcare staff are trained to deal with podiatry which, together with extra sessions, during the last quarter of the reporting period, has seen the waiting time of six weeks reduced to nil.
- During the last quarter, the waiting list for the optician was extremely long and extra sessions were booked to cope with the large numbers.
- Clinics for mental health, x-ray or scans cannot be reported in this way because those with serious mental health issues are seen within a day or so and x-ray and other scans are carried out in the prison as needed by bringing in mobile resources. By the end of the reporting period a mental health on-call service was made available for weekends.

8.3 The head of healthcare monitors waiting lists carefully and, if a list becomes too long, extra sessions are brought in. The Board recognises the positive progress made by the head of healthcare and their team in the management of waiting lists.

8.4 Another aspect of the ageing population continues to be the need for social, rather than medical care. Although Care UK's contract had been changed to include the provision of social care, this was supplemented by prison staff and prisoner carers providing the basic social care that unqualified carers are allowed to provide. In the opinion of the Board, some of the social care cases, if they had been in the community, would probably have been supported in a care home with 24/7 care. Clearly, this may be detrimental to the care of some prisoners, though firm evidence of this is not found.

8.5 The Board acknowledges that staff and prisoner carers are doing their best in sometimes difficult and challenging situations. The Board continues to be concerned about the suitability of HMP Stafford for elderly, frail prisoners, some of whom have major physical challenges and additionally mental health challenges in terms of dementia or similar illnesses.

8.6 During the reporting period, Care UK introduced 24/7 cover and, whilst there were some initial teething problems, this service has proved to be beneficial, especially to those prisoners requiring the provision of night time medication. Prisoners received clinical advice and support throughout the night, which lessened the need hospital escorts during the night.

8.7 The ageing nature of the population means that prisoners require more than the average number of hospital visits. Although the number of hours required for bed watches is only 60% of that reported in the previous year, when added to the

cost of the 1,085 escorts the average monthly cost is £53,224, a significant cost to an already financially stretched establishment.

8.8 Healthcare champions have been appointed from the prisoner population and are located in the healthcare department and on the wings to monitor the use of the facilities and to obtain feedback from those prisoners using healthcare services. They receive training on taking and reporting on blood pressure. The champions were also actively involved in a highly successful and well supported prisoner healthcare promotion event held in the gym in January 2019.

8.9 The Board is concerned that the supervision of medication issue continues to be a problem. The governor explained to the Board that his expectation was that queues are to be monitored by an officer who had 'line of sight'. Rota visits by the Board show that this is not always the case, and the risk of older and vulnerable prisoners being bullied for medication remains.

8.10 During the reporting period, healthcare staff built a relationship with the local hospital and implemented a pathway for information sharing and discharge planning to aid safe and timely discharges. It is hoped that similar relationships could be developed with two other hospitals in the area.

8.11 In November 2018, HMP Stafford received an NHS England Clinical Quality visit. The visit was a positive one, although there were some areas where further work was required, including to reduce lengthy waiting lists for podiatry, which was resolved before the end of the reporting period, and in medicine management, which is to be addressed by additional staff and regular meetings between Care UK and the pharmacy provider, Lloyds Pharmacy.

8.12 The Board would wish to commend the working relationship between healthcare and social care departments. They achieve a collaborative approach to the benefit of prisoners at HMP Stafford.

8.13 The Board has watched with interest the plans for G wing to become a regional social care facility, equipped for prisoners with demanding social care needs. This facility would allow prisoners to receive the correct type of support in an appropriate facility. The plans appear very close to being finalised; however, progress appears to have stalled, despite discussions being under way for two years.



## **9. Education and other activities**

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9.1 A new education provider, Novus, took over from the previous provider, Milton Keynes College, on 1 April 2019. This new provider is being monitored and reviewed, and progress will be reported in the next annual report.

9.2 The quality improvement group meetings occur bimonthly. The regional lead on learning and skills, as well as all relevant personnel from within the prison, come together to review and develop the action plan for development. All areas of education and activities for prisoners are reviewed and RAG (given red, amber or green status) rated based upon progress. This is seen by the IMB as a very productive group which can move the prison forward regarding educational and vocational progress and development.

9.3 The Board is encouraged to see the trust placed in prisoners, with the continued provision of laptops to enable some of them to progress their studies by writing up assignments outside the working day in their cells and on wings.

9.4 The virtual campus is accessed through the computer system and the Board notes that the prison features in the top 10 of the whole prison estate for the use of and log-in to the virtual campus. Tutors regularly download study material for prisoners to enable in-cell distance learning. Examples of this include information for prisoners studying marine biology and those completing level 3 qualifications and above. It should be noted that prisoners have no access to the internet on these computers.

9.5 Prisoners' attendance at education classes is consistently recorded as over 98% most days. Staff and prisoners alike should be congratulated on this achievement.

9.6 Learning remains a key aspect within purposeful activities. The compulsory functional skills programme previously introduced to improve maths and English for prisoners assigned to industries continued in the reporting year, with the aim of assisting those wishing to move on to education or to aid release/resettlement. This programme is supported by peer mentors from the prisoner population. Provision of this programme was, prior to the end of the year, moved from an industry responsibility to the newly appointed education provider Novus.

9.7 The Board would wish to acknowledge the efforts of workshop staff involved in the development and introduction of this basic skills programme.

9.8 The five established vocational training areas consist of bricklaying, plastering, carpentry, painting and decorating and industrial cleaning. Under the supervision of education, these areas offer training to about 50 prisoners and employment to nine orderlies. Courses last for varying lengths of time to a maximum of 17 weeks, leading to City and Guilds awards at either level 1 or 2. In addition to the above, industrial cleaning has added a qualifications and credit

framework (QCF) course in window cleaning, which runs alongside the cleaning training and lasts for three weeks for 12 prisoners at a time. A business model has been developed for window cleaning, and prisoners carried out the business activities of obtaining quotes, invoicing and recording their work. This allows the prisoners to gain skills that they could use themselves on release.

9.9 Staffing in the library has been affected by the delay in appointing new staff and thankfully, existing staff are able to cover vacant positions to ensure access for prisoners is not adversely affected. This enables prisoners to access the library during the day and evenings and at weekends. Library attendance is extremely good, with as many as 54 prisoners attending in a one-and-a-half-hour slot in the evening.

9.10 The library is regularly restocked with books and CDs in consultation with the prisoners.

9.11 During the reporting year, the prison arranged Talent Unlocked, an opportunity for prisoners to join in with the creative arts, including writing, acting, singing and producing music. It also involves creative groups being brought into the prison to entertain and teach prisoners. The IMB made good use of the skills of a prisoner who compiled a poem to mark the IMB clerk's retirement. They were invited to read it aloud at a Board meeting.

9.12 The Governor actively supported a book club in the prison and, using his own Twitter feed, managed to secure a supply of books for the group to use. It is clear to the Board that reading is a great source of comfort/relaxation for prisoners and we commend the governor on this initiative. Additionally, a chess club has been set up for prisoners and staff on one evening a month, and this is well attended.

9.13 Recognition is important to prisoners and staff alike. The prison holds regular celebrations of achievement for prisoners, and also gives out awards where prisoners have gone above and beyond in terms of support for others. Every month the governor presents workplace citizenship awards to staff, nominated by staff and prisoners alike, and selected by a performance committee.

9.14 The Board recognises that a number of prisoners hold representative/mentor/champion roles in the prison. Whilst award ceremonies acknowledge those prisoners who went above and beyond, the Board believes that using local governor autonomy in the IEP scheme may also reward the excellent work that prisoners do for each other and the commitment that they show.

9.15 Brookside Cabin provides retired prisoners with a facility to attend during the day. Due to demand, prisoners often have half-day sessions to maximise the numbers who attend and avoid having a waiting list. Space is available for quiet reading, watching TV and DVDs or chatting with peers and staff. Officers often lead activities such as bingo. A second room sees older prisoners involved in various crafts, which include painting, making models, constructing paper flowers and designing and making greeting cards. The Board commends the staff assigned

to this area as they create a positive, popular and stimulating area for the older prisoners.

9.16 Under the guidance of the Irene Taylor Trust, a non-profit making organisation inspiring people through music, seven prisoners created a band called Remain Nameless. They wrote and recorded an album and performed live in the prison. The Board is encouraged to learn that 100% of the prisoners involved reported an increase in self-confidence, 100% an increase in hope for the future, and 100% were more motivated to take part in other prison activities and groups. This excellent initiative is part of the rehabilitative culture.

9.17 Working with an external tutor, prisoners joined a Shakespeare project. Between 12 and 15 prisoners rehearsed their first performance, which was Macbeth. It was to be performed for prisoners, prisoners' families and staff. Additionally, in the area of the creative arts, a singing workshop for prisoners was also held, with rehearsals in the morning and performances around the prison in the afternoon.

9.18 The Board commends the governor and his team for the work that is undertaken around the rehabilitative culture. The range of activities is wide and varied. It is encouraging to see that prisoners are actively involved in many of the plans, and that the 'lead and champion rehabilitative culture' meeting was chaired by a prisoner and attended by prisoners from every wing.

## **10. Work, vocational training and employment**

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10.1 The Board commends the management and instructors in prison industries on achieving a further increase of 13% in turnover generated by the workshops.

10.2 During the year, there was provision for 280 prisoners to be employed for nine sessions a week in eight fully staffed workshops within industries. Employment is also available for a further 15 prisoners in the reclamation and recycling area. The gardening party accommodates another six prisoners, rising to 20 during the spring and summer season.

10.3 There is a total of 312 purposeful activity places, which accommodate 42% of the prison roll, with a 94% attendance rate.

10.4 The success of industries continued as an example to other establishments in the prison estate of what is achievable both in revenue and in the volume of work passing through.

10.5 The Board acknowledges the success of the reclamation/recycling area in again preventing any prison-created waste going to landfill, 100% being either recycled or sent to Waste to Energy facilities.

10.6 During the reporting year, the prison followed the previous year's success in the freshers' stage of the Windlesham prison garden competition and entered the next stage. The gardens received a high commendation.

10.7 The Board remains concerned that there are currently no opportunities for those within workshops to study for external qualifications. Previously there was a level 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ) in recycling available for those working in that area and a four-week course in performing manufacturing operations for those in workshop 5, both being provided by Stoke on Trent College. They are no longer available from this provider and to date the Board is not aware of any attempt to replace these study qualifications.

10.8 The majority of work in industries remains simple, repetitive and routine, although within the year some more complex wiring operations have been undertaken for a new customer. The Board, whilst concerned about the majority of this work, continues to acknowledge that it meets many of the prisoners' needs and prisoners have not raised formal concerns with the Board about monotony or the like.

10.9 A new pay structure was introduced during the year, mitigating some unfairness and inequality and also granting some small increases in pay rates. Complaints continue to be made about these rates, in particular by newly transferred prisoners who complain that rates at HMP Stafford are much lower than at their previous prison, especially if they are coming from a private sector establishment. The Board is aware a further review of the pay policy is scheduled for later in 2019, and welcomes the opportunity to pass on prisoners' comments to this review.

10.10 A course in tyre fitting and basic car maintenance, run by an outside agency, Avenues to Work, started, offering three weeks of training and accommodating 12 prisoners at any one time. All of the 36 prisoners passed the qualification and there was 100% attendance on the programme. Twenty-eight of the successful prisoners took up the offer of an interview at the end of the course, six of whom received the opportunity of work post-release and three explored self-employment.

10.11 The barbering shop offers places for 12 prisoners on an eight-week course working towards a level 2 City and Guilds certificate and can also offer a barbering service to the rest of the prison. The Board is pleased to note that the training offered has been developed further to include beard cutting.

10.12 The outside agency RMF laid a length of rail track in one of the exercise yards to train suitable prisoners in basic railway maintenance; the course lasted 12 weeks. Successful completion, alongside an NVQ with units including CSCS construction, banksman skills and first aid, guarantees a prisoner an interview on release. If suitable and still interested, a further period of training may lead to a job offer. The Board is delighted to note the success of a prisoner in securing employment following completion of this course in March 2019, with other successes in the pipeline.

10.13 A bistro named Fulford's opened in July 2018, providing staff and visitors to the establishment with a number of options for lunch. Prisoners are responsible for the preparation of food and since opening it is pleasing to report that business is good. Prisoners employed in Fulford's have the opportunity to complete their NVQ level 1 and 2 in hospitality and catering, a positive step for those seeking a career in catering on release.

## **11. Resettlement preparation**

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11.1 The Board is concerned that, for the third year running, HMP Stafford was not resourced as a resettlement prison, yet, during the reporting period, 127 prisoners were released directly from the establishment, against 183 in 2017 – 2018. The model for transferring prisoners to a resettlement prison for the final six months of their sentence does not work at HMP Stafford. As a national resource, prisoners are often held a considerable distance from home. Their resettlement prison is likely therefore to be a considerable distance from HMP Stafford and transport will not be provided for individual prisoners to travel to their resettlement prison. However, it is often not possible for HMP Stafford to have more than one prisoner going to the same resettlement prison at the same time.

11.2 Positively, for 11 months of the reporting year, all prisoners released went to accommodation on the day of release. In the remaining month, eight out of 10 prisoners were released with accommodation. The data is to be commended as the Board appreciates how difficult it is to house men convicted of sexual offences.

11.3 During the reporting period, 52 prisoners released from the prison claimed that they were looking for work, 13 claimed they were disabled and were not looking for work or education, 17 claimed they were retired and not looking for work or education and 10 were hoping to secure a place in education. The remainder either had a job/education place to go to or did not indicate their intention on release.

11.4 The Board continues to be concerned that the majority who are released from HMP Stafford have no work or education on release (other than those who are retired). The absence of employment or education on release for those who have committed a sexual offence makes successful resettlement more difficult. The Board accepts that the establishment works with a limited resource and has done what it could, but the stigma attached to a conviction for a sexual offence makes employment a challenge for many.

11.5 Myth busting sessions continued, with 29 prisoners attending a session on legal aid and debt, and 157 prisoners attending a session with the criminal justice agencies, where the probation services, the police sex offender management unit, Staffordshire MAPPA and Stafford Approved Premises were represented. A further session was held on debt issues, attended by 45 residents. Feedback was given by many prisoners who attended these sessions and in the main, they found them very worthwhile.

11.6 Five local solicitors agreed to provide a will writing service to prisoners and information has been sent to the PIDs for circulation.

11.7 All prisoners about to be discharged from HMP Stafford are assessed for their suitability to attend enrichment sessions. Clearly these sessions prove invaluable for some prisoners. The sessions included:

- Life without Bars – focused on home economics, cooking, ironing, life skills, interviewing skills, financial skills, dealing with organisations, people skills and shopping
- Job Club – prisoners met a representative from Jobcentre Plus and looked at interview techniques, CV writing and job searching
- Money advice
- Disclosure (*the most popular session*) during which prisoners received advice about when and how they need disclose their offences

11.8 The annual resettlement fair was held in October 2018, with 192 prisoners in the last 12 months of their sentence invited and 164 attending. Representatives included those from Jobcentre Plus, HMP North Sea Camp (a category D prison), Stafford and Rural Homes, Staffordshire Police, Lincolnshire Action Trust (offering resettlement services) and many others. The Board would like to commend the work of staff and partner agencies who put this successful fair together.

11.9 During the reporting period, the prison secured the services of Cleansheet, a national charity, which supports people with convictions into employment. The Board was delighted to learn that it has a database of over 130 employers covering 17,000 business centres; however, it is disappointing that due to data protection changes, prisoners can in practice only sign up when they have a contact telephone number post-release. This is clearly a challenge for prisoners and the number of prisoners signing up has fallen dramatically.

11.10 On 1 April 2019, the implementation of the enhanced through-the-gate resettlement service in non-resettlement prisons came into effect. This means that Staffordshire and West Midlands Community Rehabilitation Company is

responsible for resettlement provision in HMP Stafford. The Board will look forward to reporting on its progress in our next report.

11.11 In May 2018, HMP Stafford saw the launch of HMPPS Midlands Counselling Services with a focus on working with prisoners who are serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) or life sentences and are stuck in the system, over their original tariffs and experiencing difficulties moving on to participate in risk reduction work, seeking a transfer to a category D prison or being released.

11.12 With an average of 61 IPP/lifer prisoners at Stafford, it is extremely encouraging for the Board to note that engagement with the HMPPS Midlands Counselling Services rose from 19% in the period April – June 2018, to 59% in October – December 2018. From a pre- and post-self-rating tool, prisoners indicated a 24.84% improvement in functioning following therapy, a 36.28% improvement in problems and symptoms following therapy and a 36.55% improvement in their wellbeing post-therapy. These results are extremely encouraging for a group of prisoners that the Board has often reported as a concern.

11.13 In the first full reporting year of Horizon (an offending behaviour programme), 75 prisoners completed the course against a target of 72; 12 prisoners completed Kaizen against a target of 11 and 14 prisoners completed the nationally allocated Healthy Sex Programme (HSP). This is an excellent achievement by a small programmes team, which lost two experienced members of staff after the cessation of the sex offender treatment programme (SOTP). There are 86 prisoners on the waiting list for Horizon and 11 for Kaizen.

11.14 The Board is pleased to note that the programmes team takes an active role in staff induction to ensure that new colleagues are aware of the programmes being offered at the prison. Furthermore, the programmes team has designed information leaflets on Horizon and Kaizen, which are available to residents and their families.

11.15 The Board will look forward to reporting on the progress of the A-Z programme for which referrals have commenced in the reporting period. The Board has always been concerned about disengaged prisoners and A-Z may offer the motivation they need to work with the prison.

## C The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

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- The Board appreciates the co-operation freely given by the governor, management and staff during its work. Board members attend the prison regularly to monitor rule 45 reviews and adjudication hearings and to observe meetings. The Board responds to prisoner applications on a weekly basis and rota visits are undertaken fortnightly.
- The Board regularly attends the induction for new prisoners and explains the role of the IMB. Additionally, the Board meets fortnightly with prisoners post-induction, to monitor and report on whether their initial experience has continued positively.
- The Board holds a monthly meeting, which the Governor or deputy governor attend, to brief members on prison matters and to discuss issues arising from monitoring.
- The new IMB clerk was present at Board meetings and seemed to find her feet quickly. Her support was much appreciated.
- The chair attended the regular regional chairs' meetings. Both chair, vice-chair and Board development officer also regularly attend SLT meetings, as did other interested Board members.
- HMP Stafford was represented on the IMB 'men convicted of sexual offences' working group. It gave the Board a chance to understand the national picture for prisoners who have committed sexual offences and to pool knowledge. The Board contributed to the group's annual report.
- During the reporting period, the Board supported the IMB colleagues at YOI Werrington, with three members dual boarding. This report recognises their excellent contribution that ensured monitoring continued at Werrington.

<b>Board statistics</b>	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members dual boarding during the reporting period	3
Total number of visits to the establishment	470
Total number of segregation reviews attended	56



## D Applications to the Independent Monitoring Board

Code	Subject	Current reporting year 2018/19	Previous reporting year 2017/18
A	Accommodation (including laundry, clothing, ablutions)	8 (5%)	3 (1.9%)
B	Discipline (including adjudications, IEP sanctions)	9 (5.63%)	5 (3.18%)
C	Equality	6 (3.75%)	1 (0.64%)
D	Purposeful activity (including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell)	13 (8.13%)	11 (7.01%)
E1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	20 (12.5%)	10 (6.37%)
E2	Finance (including pay, private monies, spends)	1 (0.63%)	20 (12.74%)
F	Food and kitchens	0	1 (0.64%)
G	Health (including physical, mental, social care)	<b>33 (20.63%)</b>	18 (11.46%)
H1	Property within the establishment	17 (10.63%)	<b>21 (13.38%)</b>
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	14 (8.75%)	16 (10.19%)
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1 (0.63%)	4 (2.55%)
I	Sentence management (including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation)	7 (4.38%)	6 (3.82%)
J	Staff/prisoner concerns (including bullying)	6 (3.75%)	11 (7.01%)
K	Transfers	5 (3.13%)	13 (8.28%)
L	Miscellaneous	20 (12.5%)	17 (10.83%)
	<b>Total number of IMB applications</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>157</b>

### **Further analysis of applications:**

- Current year numbers are somewhat skewed by one serial complainer (from both a prison and IMB perspective) who submitted 24 applications (15% of the total). Excluding this prisoner, applications to the Board would have fallen from 157 to 136 in the reporting period.
- With an establishment figure of 751 prisoners, 160 applications represent only 0.21 applications per prisoner per annum (the same as 2017 – 2018), a figure which fell to 0.18 applications per prisoner excluding the serial complainer.
- Average time for response to an application by the IMB was five days in 2018 – 2019, 4.62 days in 2017 – 2018, a statistic that the Board continues to be proud of and believes provided an appropriate timeline for dealing with prisoner issues.