



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Channings Wood

for reporting Year
1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019

Published
March 2020



Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Sections

Section	Topic	Page
1	Statutory role	3
2	Executive summary	4
3	Description of establishment	6

Evidence Sections

4	Safety	7
5	Equality and fairness	9
6	Segregation/care and separation unit	11
7	Accommodation (including communication)	13
8	Healthcare (including mental health and social care)	16
9	Education and other activities	19
10	Work, vocational training and employment	21
11	Resettlement preparation	23

	The work of the IMB	24
	Applications to the IMB	24

A Sections 1 - 3

1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The period covered by the 2018-19 IMB Annual Report on HMP Channings Wood was one of some improvements and successes, some disappointments and serious challenges but above all one of change – in the way the prison is managed, the expectations and demands of and on the prisoners and staff, and the altering nature and behaviours of the prison population.

2.2 The well-planned escape of a prisoner in the spring attracted national coverage and inevitable intense investigation that such a serious event engenders. Although no blame was directly attributed to the prison management, it quickly led to further restrictions on the other prisoners' daily routines and some damage to the reputation of the establishment.

2.3 As the Board's report shows, we continue to be seriously concerned about the physical structure of what is a relatively new prison. We fail to understand why even essential repairs that impinge on the decency of the way prisoners are treated take so long to be effected – and why the cost continues to be so high, far outweighing any competitive quotations. Part of the reason would appear to be that central tendering fails to recognise local needs and the Governor has extremely limited control over his own prison's expenditure

2.4 The availability and effect of drugs in Channings Wood – and the knock-on effect of serious and widespread debt among prisoners - is another area of change. While we recognise that there are fewer disruptive incidents resulting from the use of prohibited substances thanks to better security and intelligence, prisoners still tell the Board that drugs are extremely easily available. It has not been unusual for IMB members to find the care and separation unit (CSU) almost entirely occupied by refugees from drug debt on the wings. There is a disturbing increase in serious self-harm and self-isolation. There is also evidence that reductions in drug supplies after successful interceptions have frequently spawned a noticeable increase in the illegal brewing of 'hooch'.

2.5 It would be wrong to ignore the various positive areas that members have observed during this reporting year at Channings Wood. We appreciate the way that the SMT treated members largely with frankness and trust. Most were readily available to cope with challenges we had become involved in and our relationship with even the most senior governors is generally positive and fruitful. We have welcomed the way that staff are now much more evident around the prison, and in the wings. Healthcare seems more organised and productive. The new catering manager has been met with widespread approval. The introduction of offender management in custody (OMiC – including the provision of a key worker for each prisoner), while far from extensive, is clearly a positive move. Far too few prisoners are out on release on temporary licence (ROTL) still, but the workshops and education within the prison are well-led and, in many cases, very relevant for further employment on release.

2.6 With a new Governor and Deputy in place we now look forward to the challenges of monitoring the prison, to ensure those inside are treated with fairness and decency.

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

Largely, yes. The Board regularly attends many CSU reviews, monitors the adjudication process, and attends some sessions with the independent adjudicator.

Are prisoners treated humanely?

On the individual, with a few regrettable exceptions, prisoners are treated by staff with decency and fairness. However, the ongoing poor condition of the prison's physical surroundings concerns us deeply. As we report here, some funding for repairs is starting to come through, but there are too many examples of poor living conditions that would not be tolerated outside the prison environment. Prisoners still complain of the lack of time outside their cells, and the need for increased roll calls, following the recent escape, can again reduce their time unlocked.

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

As mentioned in the executive summary, the number of prisoners on ROTL allowed to work outside the confines of the prison is very small: often only one or two per day out of a prison population of over 700. This annual report details the improvements we have observed in the education and workshop provision, and the 'through the gate' services.

Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

What plans do you have for allocating sufficient resources to upgrade the accommodation and living blocks so there is a common standard of decency across HMP Channings Wood?

Without a commitment to a serious and extensive repair schedule, there seems little prospect that the safety of prisoners will be guaranteed and the inequality in living provision identified as a being of significant concern by both Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and the IMB can be eradicated.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

How do you intend to bring down the exorbitant cost of often quite mundane repairs and improvements?

And why is more use of the prisoners' skills not tapped into, if only for basic jobs?

TO THE GOVERNOR

What steps are planned to reduce the number of self-isolators and self-harmers at Channings Wood? And despite substantial successes in the interception of drugs, what further steps to you intend to introduce to reduce the availability of drugs and the growing bullying and debt that results from them?

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 HMP Channings Wood is a Category C male resettlement prison with a capacity of just over 700 and accommodates a mix of main prisoners and those considered as vulnerable, the majority of whom have committed sex offences. The prison operates a split-site regime for the two groups, across all areas of the prison. The prison opened in 1974 on the site of a former Ministry of Defence base with some buildings added subsequently.

3.2 The prison is on an extensive site in a rural area of south Devon between Totnes and Newton Abbot with some attractive gardens and numerous trees. The site is bounded by a high fence and there are a number of public footpaths around the perimeter. During this year, additional internal fences were installed to separate the two prisoner groups and various areas to better support the control of prisoners' movement on the site. As well as eight separate living blocks, there are workshops, a kitchen, a care and separation unit, a health centre, numerous buildings housing other services, a sports field, a well-equipped gym and sports hall, a multifaith chapel, greenhouses and polytunnels. All buildings are single- or two-storey.

3.3 The eight living blocks are split between main prisoners (LB2, 3, 4, 8) and vulnerable prisoners (LB1, 5, 7). LB6 and LB7 house enhanced prisoners. New arrivals are placed in some cells in LB1 and LB8. Five of the living blocks have a central entrance area with offices, classrooms, a servery and two association rooms nearby. Cells are on four corridors on each wing, two on each floor, arranged at right angles to each other. The layout provides hidden areas at some distance from the block offices that can be difficult for staff to easily supervise.

3.4 Most blocks have single cells with a toilet and communal showers while LB8 has double cells with en-suite showers and part of LB1 has been adapted with bunk beds for dual occupancy for new arrivals.

3.5 The kitchen provides food which is taken to the living blocks in heated trolleys, food being served from each block's servery.

3.4 The care and separation unit has eight residential and two holding cells, plus accommodation for disciplinary hearings and drug testing.

3.5 Education and vocational courses are provided by Weston College, the Resettlement Group, Catch 22, Jobcentre Plus and Prospects, which is concerned with careers guidance.

3.6 Healthcare is provided by Care UK and staff are based in a health centre adjacent to the care and segregation unit. There are no in-patient beds. Nurses are on duty every day and out-of-hours GP service is provided by Devon Doctors. Most acute care is provided by Torbay Hospital. Care UK also provides on-site pharmacy services and social care. Dental health is provided by Time for Teeth. Psychology is regionally managed across the Devon cluster of prisons and oversees offending behaviour courses. Substance Misuse Service is contracted to Care UK.

3.7 There are two constant watch cells, one in the healthcare block and the other on LB5.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

4.1 In September 2018, HMIP reported that 10 of the recommendations made two years earlier about safety had not been achieved and safety was found to be insufficiently good. By early July 2019, HMIP found that reasonable progress had been made, giving credit to the implementation of a safety strategy and improved-cross department working. The Board, however, considers that the picture remains very mixed and is a continuing cause for concern.

4.2 Bullying and violence reduction

In 2018, HMIP commented on the under reporting of many violent incidents, but by 2019 'the prison had introduced a comprehensive programme of auditing the incident reporting system to ensure that all incidents were reported accurately. If incidents were found to be unreported, this was corrected and guidance and support were given to the staff involved.' So the Board is pleased to note that there has been a general reduction in the levels of reported violence. From January to August 2018, there were 117 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults but in the same period in 2019 the number had dropped by 26% to 86. Assaults by prisoners on staff also dropped, from an average of 21 per month (January to August 2018) to 16 per month in 2019.

4.3 IMB applications included eight that were specifically violence or bullying related, representing 3% of the total. Despite the positive indicators, bullying and debt related violence remained among the key concerns expressed at the monthly safer custody meetings, with newly arrived prisoners reported as being specifically targeted.

4.4 Suicide prevention and self-harm

The Board continues to be very concerned by the high number of self-harm incidents which have not reduced over time. Unlike assaults, there has been no demonstrable reduction. In the reporting period, there were 469 reported incidents of self-harm (to June 2019 443 compared to 249 to June 2018), though it is not clear how many of these were repeats carried out by the same individuals.

4.5 In June, the Board noted the mandatory staff suicide and self-harm (SASH) training. HMIP reported positively on the prison's work to address self-harm and considered that reasonable progress had been made in the identification of and support for self-harmers.

4.6 The increase in the number of prisoners self-isolating, which the Board noted last year, continued and between March and May averaged 23.

4.7 The Board welcomes the quality of peer support available in the prison and has found the safer custody representatives to be conscientious, well-motivated and valued by prisoners and staff. In contrast, Listeners felt less valued and had lower morale. Listener call outs rose by a staggering 63% with most being to vulnerable prisoners (VPs), the highest number being in August 2019.

4.8 Well-attended weekly complex case meetings have highlighted concerns and provided discussion about those prisoners who needed additional consideration and support.

4.9 Management of availability of drugs and substance misuse

In September 2018 HMIP reported that '76% of prisoners said it was easy to get illicit drugs and 27% had developed a drug problem while in the prison'. The Board noted that throughout the year, there was availability and use of illicit drugs by prisoners at various times across the whole prison, including those held in segregation, and particularly on LB1.

4.10 In response to the HMIP inspection in 2018, the prison adopted a drug strategy, linked to a supply reduction action plan, and throughout the year put in place measures (including additional fencing, new response procedures, working with the police and the photocopying of mail), to reduce the availability of drugs in the prison. It is noted that smaller amounts of cannabis, heroin and hooch have also been in the prison this year but at the time of this annual report, spice was still evident. Random testing was carried out in line with the set targets, but very few tests on the basis of suspicion were carried out because of resourcing issues.

4.11 In September 2018 there were 72 reports of psychoactive substances (PS) use but through the year the number dropped significantly to seven or eight a week, although in August 2019 there was a spike of 57 incidents. The Board continues to be concerned about the availability and use of PS. In addition, prisoners continue to brew hooch which also results in incidents while they are under the influence.

4.12 **Security**

Following the escape in April, an action plan was drawn up to identify areas of concern. A number of measures were put in place, including more frequent roll calls, new internal fencing and restrictions on access to areas adjacent to the perimeter. The Board notes that although there was some initial resistance to the changes to permitted movement around the site, prisoners have subsequently said that they now feel safer within their living blocks. The Board acknowledges that although roll calls are absolutely essential, the time taken has resulted in prisoners being late for appointments, a reduction in time spent in education and work and less time for older prisoners for exercise and association.

4.13 **Transfers and early days in custody**

The Board is concerned that the Mains induction wing (LB8) has also been used to house men who feel under threat on other wings and this has resulted in an unsatisfactory mix of prisoners. Induction on LB1 has been improved and new prisoners are initially housed in twin cells that have been upgraded.

4.14 The Board is pleased that there is now far less disparity between the experience of new prisoners in both areas of the prison and this is reflected in HMIP's findings that good progress has been made.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 In 2018, HMIP found that 'some of the structures that supported the good equality and diversity provision at the last inspection had deteriorated. Equality action team (EAT) meetings were infrequent and often poorly attended. The equality and diversity action plan was not monitored sufficiently or updated often enough, and monitoring of equality data was weak.' By July 2019, HMIP reported that an improved equality action plan was in place but EAT meetings had not been held regularly.

5.2 The equality officer has frequently been assigned to other duties which has limited their ability to focus on equalities matters and the collection of local data has only recently started. This was an issue in the Board's previous report and the Board is disappointed that the prison's regime has not been able to allow specialist officers to devote all of their appointed time to their assigned duties. However, since taking up the post the new equality officer has worked hard to coordinate equality and diversity work and is making a real impact.

5.3 The updated monitoring tool has continued to present problems and the lag in updating its data has not assisted in analysis of information about equality issues so that trends and issues can be considered along with follow up action. The equality officer instigated local data collection so that equality information is kept up to date and has used the data in presentations to EAT meetings, supporting a more proactive approach to any issues.

5.4 Prisoners with protected characteristics

There are representatives for all protected characteristics in the prison and they arrange regular meetings.

Ethnicity The ethnic makeup of Channings Wood's prisoner population is in line with that in other south west prisons, with over 80% being white British, the next largest group being 4% black British: Caribbean. To effectively represent the range of BAME prisoners, each of the representatives is from a different background and more are from the main blocks where the majority of BAME prisoners live. Efforts have been made to make certain BAME items such as hair products available through the canteen. A consular visit from the Irish embassy took place in May and efforts were made to establish links with charities and organisations for the Traveller population. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month was marked in June.

Sexual orientation A LGBT wing council was set up because the equality officer had not been able to facilitate regular meetings. A sexual health presentation was made by a nurse from healthcare. Pride was celebrated in July 2019. The prison put in place arrangements to support transgender prisoners, including obtaining female-appropriate clothes.

Age There is an increase in the number of older prisoners, with about 15% aged over 55 years and 2% over 75 years. The prison has made adjustments to take account of the ageing population. Retired men over 65 are unlocked earlier than other men and there is an over-65s group in the library.

Disability 57% of prisoners have a declared disability. Almost 50 men living in seven of the eight living blocks have personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs), the largest number living on LB5. The Board is concerned about the problems of access for men with limited mobility, including the lack of access to appropriate washing facilities. There is now a PEEPs list for workshops and industries.

Religion 59% of prisoners stated that they belonged to one of 22 main religions while just over 40% had no religious belief or adherence. While some faiths have larger numbers (Church of England approximately 120, Roman Catholic 90 and Muslim 45) others have numbers in single figures. The Board is pleased to report that there is strong chaplaincy provision for most faith groups. However, during the year those with small numbers often

had to arrange things for themselves with monthly support from religious leaders who often had to travel from a considerable distance. The Board is pleased to note that, following efforts by the chaplaincy, each religious group, except the Church of England and the Free Church, hold their own services for the whole prison. Key religious festivals are celebrated and the prison kitchen provides appropriate food and support for external groups preparing special food such as at Eid.

5.5 Foreign nationals

There has been a rise in the number of foreign nationals. From April to August 2019 there were between 44 and 52 individuals from 19 to 22 countries, by far the highest number at the time of this report being Albanian. Surgeries for foreign nationals to meet immigration staff were organised, but unfortunately some had to be cancelled at short notice due to the regime. The Board considers this to be most unsatisfactory treatment for this group of prisoners.

5.6 Complaints and DIRFS

Prisoners are aware of how to make complaints, either through the prison complaints system or the healthcare complaints process. Complaints are now acknowledged so that prisoners can be assured that complaints have been received. However, the Board notes that the timeliness and quality of responses to complaints remain variable. Prisoners also submitted DIRFS (up to around 10 a month) but on investigation, the majority of these were not found to be about discrimination and some were multiple complaints about an issue submitted by the same individual.

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 Board members have visited the unit regularly and have met all new arrivals within the required 72 hours. They are able to have private conversations and staff are cooperative.

6.2 A single governor had responsibility for the CSU during the year, which provided essential continuity of leadership. He reverted to the earlier practice of selecting suitably experienced officers for the unit rather than relying on staff rotation. However, during the year, the Board has had concerns about the lack of continuity of staff, resulting in some staff being insufficiently knowledgeable about some of the prisoners in the unit, compounded by ineffective handovers. Board members noticed some paperwork deficiencies although officers were diligent and provided adequate care. The Board welcomes the plan to achieve Enabling Environment accreditation for the unit. The segregation monitoring and review group is planned to be re-established as a stand-alone group to focus on the unit's work rather than it being covered in safer custody meetings.

6.3 The Board welcomes the establishment of a new process for recording a range of information about the segregation unit to support better analysis and identification of trends and future actions. In the absence of reliable data, information circulated at the prison's morning meeting was analysed for the period May to August 2019. This showed that 29 individuals had been in segregation, staying an average of 21 days, the longest stay being 81 days; 10 men stayed for more than 28 days and three men spent one day in the unit. The occupancy rate for cells averaged 6.4. All eight cells were occupied for eight days and seven for 13 days, showing that the prison often had little flexibility to house additional men in segregation.

6.4 In 2018, HMIP noted that 'prisoners under 25 were disproportionately represented in..... segregation'. In 2019 from April to August most of the men in segregation were from the youngest age groups: approximately 40% aged between 20 and 29 and just under 40% aged between 30 and 39. Approximately 80% were of white British ethnicity. The Board has raised questions about whether there are more effective ways of managing these younger men so that fewer of them are in the segregation unit in future.

6.5 The perception of the unit by prisoners as being a route to transfer to another prison, often following involvement in a serious misdemeanour, decreased during the year as governors demonstrated that prisoners going to the unit were returned to the living blocks unless there were exceptional circumstances. However, the Board notes with concern the marked increase in the number of prisoners remaining in the unit, sometimes for extended periods, because they refused to relocate to living blocks for a variety of reasons, but primarily due to debts and bullying. This has been an ongoing issue as, quite often, these prisoners made up the majority on a unit that was not designated for this purpose. There has been a knock-on effect that when space has been an issue in the unit, some men were moved on to LB8, affecting the operation of that block.

6.6 A small but significant number of prisoners within the segregation unit have been on ACCTs. This was due to the limited spaces for accommodating men with mental health issues who self-harmed, threatened to take their own life or were involved in violent incidents. The Board monitors this development and believes that, whilst permissible, this is not an ideal situation.

6.7 The physical state of the segregation block continued to be below the desired standard despite some repairs during the year including new flooring in the entrance and a new

entrance door and this was noted in HMIP's 2018 report. Despite some damage by prisoners, there has been some improvement in the appearance of the unit as cells have been repaired and repainted more quickly than before. The exercise facilities are still very basic. There are still no privacy curtains in the cells and the use of in-cell CCTV cameras has sometimes been an issue for men wanting privacy to use the toilet. Although the staff are sensitive to this issue, the Board considers this is not a satisfactory arrangement. Occasionally, CCTV has failed, and prisoners regularly cover cell cameras.

6.8 The Board observed that prisoners' access to items was equivalent to what they would normally receive in other areas of the prison.

6.9 IMB members regularly attend good order and discipline (GOOD) reviews which were generally carried out in a sensitive and timely manner with a representative of Care UK almost always present.

6.10 Members attend some adjudications and those attended now appear to be procedurally correct, with staff making fair and appropriate judgements. From January to August 2019 there were 1350 adjudications. Numbers varied significantly over the year from 103 to 282 each month. Prisoners are aware of how to appeal adjudication decisions.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

7.1 Living block accommodation

The Board continues to have serious concerns about the variable physical state of the living blocks and the impact that long term deficiencies have on the day-to-day life of prisoners and the working environment for staff. On visits to some blocks, board members repeatedly found leaking and broken showers, cells with broken windows, damaged flooring, water ingress, damp walls, blocked gutters and broken furniture.

7.2 The Board's concerns were reflected in the HMIP finding in July 2019: 'The physical condition of many of the accommodation units was still too poor, in spite of better efforts to paint and clean them. Showers were a conspicuous example, despite refurbishment on one unit. However, the stark contrast which had been noticed in 2018 between living blocks 1, 2, 4 and the rest, both in their physical state had largely disappeared..... there was a long way to go before the accommodation could satisfy basic criteria of decency.' Their judgement was that insufficient progress had been made against their earlier recommendation.

7.3 Throughout the year, some improvements have been made – some repairs have been carried out, walls painted, some with attractive murals and furniture replaced – but the Board is frustrated by the delay in bringing all living blocks up to an acceptable standard. Some repairs, including to showers on blocks 5 and 7, remain incomplete and the Board is concerned that men on these blocks have significantly poorer living conditions. The lack of privacy screens in these showers does not support decency. Facilities for prisoners with limited mobility vary. The new showers on block 5 will have disabled access and are modelled as wet rooms. This is to be welcomed. In block 8, all cells have integral showers but disabled access is very poor as there are high sills into the showers and the cell doors are too narrow for wheelchairs. This means that some men with disabilities in main blocks would be unable to benefit from the services and skills of the induction unit staff on arrival at the prison.

7.4 Another problem has been the need to replace the prison's damaged gas main which has had an impact on the operation of the kitchen and some workshops. Alternatives have been used at considerable cost but, again, the Board considers that the length of time that has elapsed since the initial problem is unacceptable.

7.5 One significant restriction on the scope and speed of repairs has been the lack of adequate financial support. The governor has a very limited devolved budget and has submitted a number of bids to fund some development. Although some have been successful, the significant backlog of maintenance and repairs are an ongoing concern for the Board as are the extremely high costs made by GFSL for undertaking straightforward repairs.

7.6 The Board welcomes a scheme to train prisoners in handyman skills. This in its early stages and it is intended that the men will subsequently be employed to undertake minor repairs.

7.7 The cleanliness of the wings has fluctuated but during the reporting year, but the Board noted that this had improved. The domiciliary teams have dedicated officers and appropriate cleaning materials and Board members have noticed a real sense of pride emerging in a number of living blocks.

7.8 **Prison regime**

Following the escape and in response to staff shortages, a new regime was introduced in April and initially raised complaints from prisoners as their free movement was restricted.

7.9 The Board continued to be concerned about the effects of limited staffing, particularly at weekends, which can deny prisoners access to gym sessions and association time, which is detrimental to morale.

7.10 The Board is pleased to note that there is now a senior officer based on every wing and the impact of their presence is positive. Other staff, however, are regularly rotated around the prison blocks which frequently results in staff having insufficient knowledge of the wing they are working on, or the prisoners living there.

7.11 Wing forum meetings were given insufficient importance in the prison timetable and many planned meetings were cancelled during the reporting period. The Board believes that this important forum for prisoners has not been given the necessary status by prison managers, although it is highly valued by wing representatives.

7.12 **Food**

A new catering manager took up post in April 2019 and was joined by two experienced staff. The menus were transformed and provide more choice and better quality food. These changes have been well received by prisoners. There are food forums where the kitchen staff meet prisoners and consider feedback.

7.13 Visits were made to wings during the serving of lunch and dinner. The serveries were clean and fit for purpose and on most occasions the orderlies were in whites. Food was tasted by Board members during most visits, in front of prisoners, and was found to be generally acceptable. All wings have food complaint books; prisoners did not make much use of them but this is gradually changing. Food forums now provide an opportunity for prisoners to raise issues with kitchen staff.

7.14 The trollies used for transporting food from the kitchen to the living blocks were too often not fit for purpose, in their function and cleanliness. There has been some lack of clarity about responsibilities for keeping them clean and well-maintained. The Board reported its concerns on numerous occasions to prison managers, but the situation remains unresolved.

7.15 **Property**

Applications to the Board about property within the prison remain among the highest number but had reduced by 50% (30) as compared to 45 last year. Those about property on transfer into the prison reduced from 57 to 51.

7.16 **Telephones**

Prisoners had access to telephones during association. Where men were self-isolating, they were given opportunities to use telephones in safety at times when the other prisoners on their wing were locked up. On one visit Board members found that there were only three working phones for 109 people on LB3.

7.17 **Kit and laundry**

Men can now wear their own clothes except for during visits and when escorted from the prison. The prison holds sufficient kit for prisoners' needs and staff have made efforts to prevent hoarding in cells. Laundry is done by the prison's laundry on a weekly rotation across the wings. When there were problems with the laundry, caused by gas supply

problems, it was effectively dealt with at other establishments.

7.18 Sports field

The Board regrets that the outdoor sports facilities appear not to be used, uncared for and that this vital resource for health and wellbeing has been lost.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 General provision and quality of services

In their joint inspection with HMIP in 2018, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) found that the quality of healthcare required improvement and issued several requirement notices. These included the need for clinical governance arrangements to be strengthened, a health promotion strategy should be in place and prisoners with long-term conditions should have individual care plans. The Board agreed with HMIP that primary care was stretched and largely delivered a reactive service and that there had been a degree of instability in the management of healthcare services.

8.2 At the Inspectorate's Independent Review of Progress (IRP) in 2019, it was found 'that improvements had been made and the provider was no longer in breach of the regulations'. The CQC made one recommendation: to 'ensure that all patients with a diagnosed long-term condition have personalised care plans in place'. The Board is pleased to note the latest HMIP findings that good progress had been made against its earlier recommendations, there was improved chronic condition management and nurse-led clinics were introduced for long-term conditions such as diabetes, lung and heart conditions. A health promotion strategy was in place but it is too early for the Board to evaluate its impact. Existing accommodation was reorganised to create sufficient clinical treatment bases.

8.3 The Board notes that for the second part of the reporting period a number of improvements were in place: better clinical supervision was planned for the year to include staff appraisals, there were improved nursing staffing levels with an increased number of bank staff trained and cleared to work within the prison environment and a reduction in staff vacancies to 1 FTE nurse and 0.75 healthcare assistant. A new paramedic post was appointed from April 2019 and has proved to be effective.

8.4 HMIP and CQC concluded that 'the standard of provision is similar to that which patients could expect to receive elsewhere in the community'.

8.5 From April 2019, the nursing cover hours were extended beyond 6 pm on Mondays and Thursdays to deliver early evening cover but remain from 8.30am to 5.30pm at weekends. Doctors provide eight sessions per week although the service was disrupted for more than two months in the early summer due to staff sickness. This resulted in both a backlog of appointments and a change in the approach to the prescribing of some medication for a time.

8.6 In 2018, HMIP had found that 'supervision of medicine queues was inconsistent and privacy was limited. There was evidence that some prisoners were intimidating others for their medicines' but the Board is encouraged to observe that officers are now usually present during medication clinic times on LB5 and that there is a pharmacy technician on the dispensing hatches three to four days a week.

8.7 Prisoner complaints and feedback

HMIP reported in 2019 that 'a more satisfactory complaints system had been established'. However, from March to June 2019 IMB-health related applications had increased to 19 from 12 in the same period in 2018 and applications from the mains block prisoners had doubled during this time. This may suggest that the healthcare complaints process was not adequately understood or that it was not been viewed as being credible.

8.8 The prisoner survey in September 2018 reported that 'many prisoners were negative about access to health care services with only 22% in the survey saying it was easy or very easy to see a GP. However, 56% said the quality of GP provision was 'good'.

8.9 The Board continues to observe a degree of disconnect between healthcare and the prison. Examples of this are the poor constant watch arrangements (healthcare cell only) and difficulties in dispensing four hourly-medicines (especially analgesics) within the daily regime.

8.10 Mental health services

Demand for these services is high, with 55% of prisoners in the HMIP survey saying they had a mental health problem. The Board notes improvements in the assessment and treatment of mental health conditions, and welcomes the weekly attendance of a psychiatrist at the prison. Waiting times for assessments have decreased and healthcare staff routinely attend assessment in care, custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews and other relevant meetings.

8.11 In 2018, HMIP reported that 'the quality of ACCT documents remained poor with weak assessments, inconsistent case management, poorly attended reviews and inadequate care plans'. By 2019, their judgement was that good progress had been made through changes in the way prisoners are supported including a weekly interdepartmental meeting.

8.12 From January to July 2019, there were 281 ACCTs opened, a rise of 13% from the previous year. The continuing high number of open ACCTs prompted the IMB to adopt a more robust thematic approach to its monitoring during 2019: sampling both the documentation and ACCT reviews, and speaking more regularly with prisoners on open ACCTs and those in post-closure. The Board continues to express concern that ACCT documentation is of variable quality, is occasionally incomplete and sometimes does not accompany men when they move off their wing. Board members have observed that most ACCT reviews that they have attended have been conducted in a considerate and compassionate manner.

8.13 Another concern of the Board is the number of prisoners being transferred to Channings Wood on open ACCTs. In one month, 13 of the 45 prisoners on open ACCTs were transferred in, many with incomplete paperwork.

8.14 Substance misuse treatment services

This service has continued to be provided by EDP and it is planned to extend it from five to seven days a week in autumn 2019. Referrals via the health centre and senior duty officers work quite well but the local referrals directly from the living wings have been less efficient. The group work programmes have been extended and attendance has improved significantly. This appears to be the result of staff being more proactive with prisoners and what they describe as 'a better recovery culture across the prison'. However, the service still experiences a degree of competition with other demands on prisoners' time such as education and work.

8.15 There is currently one peer mentor prisoner working with SMS across both the VP and Mains wings of the prison. The Board is pleased to see the introduction of more group recovery sessions involving music, singing, and arts, which have proved popular. One-to-one work with prisoners has been more limited and there remains no dedicated space for these meetings to take place.

8.16 Constant watch and self-isolating prisoners

During this reporting period, there has been a significant increase in the number of men placed on constant watch because of concerns that they were at serious risk of suicide or self harm as well as those self-isolating. Fifteen prisoners were placed on constant watch (four on two occasions) for periods ranging from a few days to one of just over four months. The Board is concerned about the lack of more appropriate options for prisoners who experience extended periods of constant watch. At the time of this report, two prisoners were in constant watch accommodation, including one on a 'step-down' arrangement. Another 11 had chosen to self-isolate.

8.17 HMIP recommended that the constant watch cell in the health centre should be relocated. The cell in healthcare continued to be used throughout most of the year and, whilst de-commissioned for a short period, was back in use at the time of this report. The Board continues to express concern about this being a very poor environment, an inappropriate location and lacking facilities for use with such vulnerable prisoners. The Board has detailed its concerns to prison managers about prevailing conditions in constant watch cells. Nevertheless, most constant watches have been conducted effectively.

8.18 Deaths in custody

Regrettably there have been two deaths in custody during this reporting period, compared with three in 2017-8, one of which is believed to have been through natural causes and the other self-inflicted.

8.19 Dental care

The Board welcomes the fact that dental provision is now fully staffed for three-and-a-half days a week with equivalent services to those seen in the community, in a 'clean and suitable environment'. Staff worked assiduously to overcome equipment faults with the result that time on waiting lists averaged three weeks.

8.20 Social care and elderly prisoners

In 2018, HMIP reported that 'social care arrangements were established but care packages were not being delivered'. The Board notes with concern that 26% of prisoners who had disabilities believed that their needs were not well addressed.

8.21 Prisoners with social care needs are assessed by Devon County Council (DCC) to receive a social care package which is now delivered by Care UK. Their care plans and the work of the Buddies (prisoners trained in care) have been overseen by a CareUK health care assistant. Board members' conversation with prisoners reveal that they are satisfied with the care received and very satisfied by the support afforded by Buddies. The social care and referral process, working through health care and the prison's equality officer, appears to work effectively. The Board therefore believes that social care provision is generally effective.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 The Board is pleased to note that following the joint IRP with Ofsted, in July 2019, HMIP reported that 'reasonable progress' had been made against the three themes identified in their 2018 report when education had been judged 'not sufficiently good'.

9.2 Education has continued to be provided by Weston College and is now governed by a new contractual agreement. Monthly provider/performance meetings are held to ensure that provision meets the prison's needs, targets are achieved and the budget used efficiently. The Board is pleased that feedback is sought through Perspective Of Course surveys being given to all course participants, the establishment of prisoner forums and that results were taken seriously and acted on.

9.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is resettlement-based and includes a broad range of vocational courses with clear progression routes. All courses are linked to nationally recognised qualifications, with the exception of a cleaning course. The 'guided learning hours' for courses are adequate and are set by the relevant awarding body.

9.4 During induction, prisoners attend a presentation on learning and development opportunities. Their levels of literacy and numeracy are assessed and they complete a self-assessment to establish any specific learning barriers. Although there are delays with sentence plans, Weston College and the offender management unit (OMU) work to assess individuals' needs which are added as advisory to sentence plans; some courses are mandatory if prescribed by a court. Vocational courses are available to prisoners who can do the necessary maths and English or can demonstrate that they have the attitude and ability to improve these skills to the required level.

9.5 Men can progress from one course to other, relevant, ones. For example, First Aid at Work training is now done as part of prisoners' induction, but can open up opportunities such as warehouse or forklift courses (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) level 3). Allocation boards prevent repetition of courses. Priority is given to prisoners' training needs in the lead up to the last 12 weeks of their sentence when Weston College, the Department of Work and Pensions and Catch 22 jointly draw up a bespoke resettlement package for each man. Training is tightly timetabled and closely monitored.

9.6 To prevent prisoners choosing work over education, the latest pay review ensured parity of pay levels between employment and education/training and pay levels do not depend on incentives and earned privileges (IEP) status. There are sufficient education places to cover the needs of prisoners, but the Board is disappointed that there were not enough places for work. At the end of the reporting year there were around 80 men who were unemployed.

9.7 Attendance and punctuality

The average attendance figure for the reporting year was 86% and by August it had increased to 92%. The Board is pleased to note that this resulted from staff encouraging prisoners to attend training and following up prisoners after agreed authorised absences to return to courses.

9.8 Punctuality was reported by HMIP to be improved because of more efficient movement arrangements but was still not consistently good. When hours were lost due to the regime, medical appointments etc, additional hours were allocated for men to complete their course.

9.9 **Homework and distance learning**

A course-linked homework session has been trialled, so that men could continue their education over weekends. This has worked well with homework checked on the following Monday.

9.10 A distance learning coordinator is employed for two days a week and a number of distance learning courses are supported. During the reporting period, the Board acknowledges the highest ever level of participation in Open University courses. Courses are put on the secure ICT study intranet known as Virtual Campus (VC) which prisoners have access to for two sessions a week. This has been working well and has been incorporated into pre-release workshops. VC makes up the fourth day of a revised cleaning course and a new entry functional skills group making them full-time courses. VC introductory sessions are used effectively to encourage men to use IT.

9.11 Throughout the reporting period, there were very few weekend activities in the education block available to prisoners. Some social and personal development activities – music, yoga, chess and reading clubs – were set up on Saturday mornings.

9.12 Library services are now delivered by Weston College and a new contract with Askews and Holts library services has been implemented to supply books. Library staff have been working with reception and wing orderlies to ensure stock is retrieved from outgoing prisoners and from living blocks. The ordering of books has proved difficult due to the lack of a suitable computerised system. The Sparks computer library system has been withdrawn nationwide due to security risks identified in its operating software. Over the reporting period, library attendance was down, partly due to the regime. The length of opening hours and times the library was open made it difficult for prisoners to get to use its facilities. There was a shortage of staff cover for the library due to budgetary restrictions.

9.13 Gym facilities in the prison are of a good standard and available to all prisoners although there are some restrictions on certain types of offenders. Indoor sport and fitness activities are provided by prison staff and can lead to Weston College provided courses (Level 1, 2 and 3). Prisoners working in the kitchen have found it difficult to attend the gym and library due to their working hours.

9.14 A good quality magazine 'Your Voice' is produced by prisoners and includes articles on issues, celebrations, events etc.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 Work activities and vocational training

Types of work across the various industries remained static during the year. A project to update the polytunnels was started which included installation of a new water tank, water lines, pump and UV filtration system. Further works are planned for 2019-2020 but will be dependent on funding. Some produce from the functioning polytunnels started to be used in the prison kitchens. Any unused produce is not wasted, with items either going to a local rehabilitation project (Landworks) or to local foodbanks.

10.2 Due to the escape of a prisoner in April 2019, increased security measures were put in place with only low-risk prisoners allowed to undertake horticultural activities near the external fence. This meant a number of prisoners could not complete their training course and, at the end of this reporting period, only three men remained on this course.

10.2 In 2018, HMIP reported that outcomes for prisoners required improvement. The Board is pleased that reasonable progress had been made by the 2019 IRP: 'The standard of prisoners' work in vocational training was generally good, and very high in the wood mill and wood assembly.

10.3 Prisoners' behaviour and attitudes had also improved '[they] now behaved well while engaged in education, skills or work activities. They did not use poor language and were helpful to each other during the sessions.'

10.4 There were steam plant issues during most of the reporting period which impacted on the operation of some work activities but it is anticipated that planned gas pipe replacement work would start in autumn 2019.

10.5 Over the reporting period, retention on all training activities remained high at 99% with 98% of these successfully achieving the objectives of their course, an increase on last year's achievement.

10.6 In the HMIP inspection in 2018, prisoners' attendance and punctuality at work were not found to have been prioritised by managers. However, over the reporting period, attendance at work activities improved with fewer shutdowns, resulting from improved prison officer numbers. The prison report 'CU095a – Hours Worked in Industry' recorded attendance as 85.5%, above the 80% target. This was also an improvement on the previous year's figure of 81.9%. Staff continued to chase non-attendance for work, submitting a daily report to the industries manager. There was also an initiative to recruit from unemployed prisoners.

10.6 With staffing levels back to an appropriate level, Weston College met the primary aim of providing maths and English training across the industries. The Board welcomes the growing number of Level 3 courses offered in vocational areas. The College established closer links with OMU resulting in more key workers and prison staff getting involved in the learning process. A computer based system 'CURIOUS' was implemented and although providing improvements, had not become fully fit for purpose.

10.7 Weston College implemented a new, relevant resettlement-based curriculum including First Aid at Work, Construction Skills Certificate Scheme and IOSH Level 3. Courses provided by Weston College continued to focus on employability of prisoners completing training courses.

10.8 Links and dialogue with local employers and agencies further improved and included 'new employer' days at fixed points during the year. Catch 22 was involved in a more bespoke process for preparing prisoners for release, offering a programme covering housing, banking needs and work opportunities, tailored to each individual. The Board considers that this revised approach was working well.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 The quality of offender management (OM) systems has improved in the last year. Improvements to the oversight and management of OM procedures were noted in the Independent Review of Progress (IRP) carried out by HMIP in July 2019. It remains a concern to the IMB that there are approximately 110 prisoners (15% of the total population) whose offender management needs are not yet being met as a result of previous backlogs. These prisoners are not sure about their sentence plans and lack information about the courses they need to follow and the work they need to do, to improve prospects leading up to and after release.

11.2 During the year, prisoners have continued to report slow responses or perceived absence of OM activity, in their applications to the IMB. Nevertheless, as a result of better management systems, sentence planning has improved. All new arrivals at the prison are subject to offender assessments (OASys) which direct the work of offender managers as they address the needs of individuals and groups of prisoners.

11.3 Prisoners are generally positive about the offending behaviour programmes available, such as the thinking skills programme. Evidence for this is seen in the good completion rate for such programmes. Liaison between OM workers and psychologists promote good links with outside agencies such as probation services and multi agency public protection (MAPPA), for example, by sharing minutes of prisoners' case meetings. Prisoners nearing the end of their sentences stated that they were familiar with probation services in the communities to which they would be released and were in contact with probation workers.

11.4 The Board remains concerned that only a very few prisoners are involved in release on temporary licence (ROTL) programmes (three at the time of writing). Numbers on home detention curfew (HDC) have grown during the year. Fifty-eight men obtained conditional release and 85 men obtained conditional re-release. Rehabilitation programmes and support organised by Catch 22 are well planned and efficient with a delivery rate of 80%. In discussions with Board members, prisoners stated that they had been helped to set up bank accounts, were made aware of benefits entitlements and had been put in contact with employment and accommodation agencies. They were also given helpful advice on universal credit arrangements. Prisoners hold the realistic view that the more they do to follow advice and take the initiative, the more successful rehabilitation services are likely to be. The few prisoners who stated that the help received was of limited use showed that they had failed to engage and expected all work to be carried out by prison staff and agencies.

11.5 The Board believes that prisoner transfers are handled efficiently. Prison managers follow up prisoners' transfer requests, especially where family contact and responsibilities are concerned. During the year, only a very few applications (16) were received by the Board in relation to problems with transfers (41 in 2018). There were a few cases during the year where prisoners had been transferred to Channings Wood for specific courses, but these courses had not available.

11.6 The Choices organisation oversees prison visits. There is an attractive visitor centre outside the prison gate, with good play and recreation facilities for children. There are further play facilities for younger children, in the visits hall. There are monthly extended visits for enhanced prisoners who have young families, to enable contact and contribute to rehabilitation work. Security around family visits is effective but sensitive to family needs.

C Section – Work of Board

This year saw three new members attend the new members' course and complete their probation.

The Board undertook its annual performance review and adopted an action plan to address the issues raised.

Following concern about the rise in the number of vulnerable prisoners, the Board altered its rota to improve its focus on this group of men. Members now regularly monitor ACCT paperwork, attend some reviews, visit a sample of self-isolators and see all who are on constant watch.

D

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14
Total number of visits to the establishment	618
Total number of segregation reviews attended	74

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	12	9
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	5	13
C	Equality	2	14
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	7	14
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	9	25
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	6	4
F	Food and kitchens	2	1
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	56	46
H 1	Property within this establishment	30	45
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	51	57
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	6	8
I	Sentence management including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	45	47
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	32	32
K	Transfers	16	41
	Total number of IMB applications	279	356