



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP Featherstone

for reporting year
1 November 2018 – 31 October 2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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A Introductory sections 1 – 3

1 Statutory role of the Independent Monitoring Board

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

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is specifically charged to:

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

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

2 Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the IMB at HMP Featherstone for the period 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019. IMB evidence was obtained from observations made on prison visits, rota reports, attending meetings, scrutiny of prison records and data, applications from prisoners together with informal conversations with prisoners and staff.

The Board continues to see improvements in the effectiveness and operational running of the establishment. Despite some refurbishment, significant improvements are still required to the poor state of repair in parts of the prison (section 7). The introduction of the clear, rehabilitative, enabling and decent (CRED) programme to improve working and living conditions using appropriately trained and security-cleared prisoners has been a positive initiative that has worked well (7.4; 10.10).

During the last year HMP Featherstone has dealt with many difficult prisoners and increased numbers involved in organised crime gangs (OCGs) many of whom have little interest in work or education (4.3). Their challenging and often aggressive behaviour has caused problems for frontline staff who have had to deal with the consequences on a daily basis. Detailed attention has been given throughout the year to tackling the ingress of illicit items, namely drugs, mobile phones and tobacco, resulting in some improvement (4.4).

The recruitment of new staff has continued with a current complement of 124 officers against an establishment target of 136. This has allowed the establishment to improve day-to-day relationships between prisoners and staff. However, ensuring new staff are fully integrated places additional pressure on the system (7.8).

Emphasis has continued on achieving a rehabilitative culture within the establishment (11.3). The introduction of the offender management in custody (OMiC) model, supported by a wide range of rehabilitative and educational courses, has helped to create a calmer and safer environment within the establishment (11.2). Prisoners now have a dedicated key worker who offers support in developing improved behaviour and skills, thus equipping them better for release. However, towards the end of the reporting year, there has been some deterioration in outcomes resulting from a poorly performing educational contract (9.3; 9.5).

The Governor and senior management team (SMT) continue to work constructively with the prison council and other representative groups to make improvements in prison life for everyone (4.4; 5.1; 7.12). In response to the last Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons (HMIP) report, the Governor and the SMT have implemented strategic objectives to address its findings and this is evident in the improved rating that has been given against HMIP healthy prison test. Attention has been given to the detailed collection of evidence in all areas in order to understand the problems and inform a wide range of initiatives designed to address these problems.

The Board would like to express its thanks to the Governor, SMT and staff for the openness of communication it has received and the cooperative way in which monitoring questions, queries and concerns have been dealt with throughout the year.

Main judgements

Are prisoners treated fairly?

The IMB believes that prisoners continue to be treated fairly at HMP Featherstone. There is a stable regime that allows maximum time out of cells and good opportunities to participate in educational, work and leisure activities (7.8). Prisoners are encouraged to engage in consultative activities and committees so that their voices are heard. General discipline and adjudications are conducted fairly and have not been a source of complaint to the IMB (6.8). There is an issue about the reluctance of other establishments to accept those foreign national prisoners granted category D status (5.8).

Are prisoners treated humanely?

The Board considers that prisoners are treated humanely at HMP Featherstone. The introduction of OMiC has seen keyworkers being further embedded, thus demonstrating some positive working relationships with prisoners (11.2; 11.3). There is zero tolerance and challenge to staff who demonstrate inappropriate language or attitudes towards prisoners.

The ageing fabric of the prison means that some accommodation and facilities are below the standard considered acceptable (section 7). Although work has been done to partially refurbish house 2, other areas of the prison are in a state of disrepair with showers particularly being unfit for purpose (7.2).

Detailed information systems in the safer custody and security departments have helped to improve understanding of the issues and hence the implementation of safety initiatives in line with national and local policies. Recommendations from HMIP in 2018 have informed a strategic plan to work towards providing a safer, healthier prison environment (section 4).

Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

The Board believes that prisoners overall are well prepared for their release. The progression of OMiC implementation has seen an improvement in the lives of prisoners, stimulating empowerment and confidence, which has provided them with an opportunity to access learning and develop new skills ready for release (9.2; 9.4; 10.2). A major concern to the continuation of this preparation is the change of the education supplier to Novus this year (9.3). It is considered a retrograde step with courses, tutors and some classes not being available for the last six months. This will impact on prisoners who will not achieve the appropriate qualifications eligible for outside employment and also undermine the prison's excellent previous track record of educational achievement.

Main areas for development

To the Minister

- The Board expressed its concern in its 2017 – 2018 report about the poor state of the buildings and fabric of HMP Featherstone. Whilst some refurbishment has taken place this year under the prisons' improvement scheme (PPI) some work is only partially completed. Showers in some accommodation units are totally unacceptable. Continued lack of investment by the Ministry of Justice in deteriorating buildings and facilities will continue to put a strain on prisoners, management and staff (section 7).

Can the Minister consider how realistic are budgets for refurbishment?

- A second area of concern in 2017 – 2018 was the operation of the maintenance contract. The Board continues to express concerns about the performance of the estates contractor, Amey, which appears to struggle to deliver the maintenance and repairs work within an acceptable timescale and cost (section 7).

Can the Minister investigate the efficacy of the contract-awarding process?

- The awarding of the contract for education to Novus gives the Board major concerns. The transition period, which commenced in April 2019, shows little evidence that it is up to speed with what is required. Certain parts of the curriculum are not running due to a large number of staff vacancies or scheme approvals and completions of certificates are not being finalised. It is difficult to understand how a contract can be awarded with the contractor being guaranteed 95% payment each month without performing to its contractual specification. The Governor has no ability to withhold payments (9.3; 9.5).

Can the Minister investigate and report on the robustness of the educational tenders?

- Maintaining staffing levels together with efficient recruitment and selection is essential to ensure the prison continues to have sufficient human resources to continue to operate a decent and humane regime and to maintain the good work and practices that have been introduced so far. Increase in police recruitment which attracts higher salary levels has a knock-on effect on prison officer recruitment. Issues still continue with the national vetting and clearance process for staff, hampering recruitment across all areas, including of new IMB members.

Can the minister ensure funding is approved to maintain the correct level of staff?

Can the minister investigate ways of improving the vetting and clearing process?

To the Prison Service

- In the 2017 – 2018 report we identified loss of property on transfer between establishments as a major concern. This still continues to be a problem and leads to frustration between the prisoner, other establishments and HMP Featherstone over items lost and their value. Although the Board has established a monitoring system with HMP Featherstone reception staff, the system generally needs attention. The current process of uniting prisoners with their belongings is cumbersome and ineffective. Compensation claims provide a drain on the public purse (7.11; section D).

Can the Prison Service undertake a full review of property storage and transfers?

- The Board continues to express its concerns about the delivery of the services supplied by maintenance contractors, Amey (section 7). Its continued inability to complete refurbishment and repairs in a timely and cost-effective manner needs to be reviewed. Restrictions under the contract prohibit possible use of prisoner resources in undertaking basic maintenance.

Can the Prison Service investigate the details of the contract performance and explore better alternative commercial opportunities?

- The kitchen at HMP Featherstone is in urgent need of updating, refurbishment or complete replacement (7.10).

Can the Prison Service plan adequately for capital replacement?

To the Governor

- The new educational supplier Novus does not appear to be meeting the terms of its contract. Key actions identified through the HMIP inspection appear to have gone unaddressed or deadline dates have been moved back. Awarding of certificated courses and preparation for release appear to be in jeopardy. Not all prisoners are gainfully employed or attend activities (9.3; 9.6; 10.6; 10.9; 10.11).

Can the Governor and the SMT continue to take robust action to mitigate these issues?

- The Board wishes to express its concerns about the level of safety identified in the HMIP report by prisoners, with 25% of the population still feeling unsafe particularly in houses 1-4. The care and separation (segregation) unit (CSU) is often seen by prisoners as a way to secure a move to another establishment and increasingly for some, segregation is lengthy (6.7).

Can the Governor and the SMT consider what further actions can be taken to manage this situation?

- Despite protocols and guidance, the execution of cell clearances and the recording and securing of prisoners' property are inconsistent. The tracking of property when a prisoner is relocated either to segregation or another unit is problematic (7.11).

Can the Governor consider retraining all staff, particularly new officers, in the correct protocol?

- Controlling waste and associated costs is important in the running of the prison budget. The budget for food is tight and any waste impacts on what can be provided. Food is frequently observed discarded into spur bins (7.9).

Can the Governor ensure tighter control on aspects of food waste?

- The Board must raise its concerns about the mismatch in prisoners' perceptions of healthcare provision. A study by the IMB of older prisoners' perceptions of healthcare indicated they thought it was poor (8.10; 8.12). This differs from surveys carried out by the healthcare department.
- Prisoners sometimes find it difficult to access Healthcare in a timely manner. The introduction of an online booking system, similar to that in use in other prisons, would be welcomed; it would be far more efficient and significantly enhance the prisoner wellbeing.

Can the Governor ask Care UK to address these differences?

Improvements

- The Board recognises the enthusiasm, contribution and strong leadership demonstrated by the Governor and SMT in continuing to make HMP Featherstone a more pleasant and safer place in which to both live and work. This has resulted in an increase in staff morale and a willingness to support new officers in their posts. This has been instrumental in creating an atmosphere where prisoners feel respected and supported.
- The Board recognises the efforts that have been made again throughout the year in making improvements both to the fabric and appearance of the prison. Additionally, it commends the senior team on the diligence and due care shown in critically examining their functional areas.
- The successful implementation of OMiC at the establishment is assisting prisoners to address their issues and prepare for their eventual release (11.2; 11.3).
- A range of new initiatives around self-isolating prisoners, the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme, drug and debt strategies and support are welcomed and it is hoped that these will show benefits in subsequent reports (4.4; 4.12).
- Installation of in-cell telephones, currently being implemented throughout the prison, has been welcomed, with prisoners suggesting it gives them greater flexibility and privacy when speaking to their families and solicitors (7.7).

3 Description of the prison

3.1 HMP Featherstone is an adult male closed category C training and resettlement prison situated eight miles north of Wolverhampton with close access to the M6 and M54 motorways. The prison, which opened in 1976, is publicly run and occupies part of the same campus as HMP Oakwood and HMP Brinsford.

3.2 The prison has a baseline certified normal accommodation (CNA) 687 with an in-use CNA of 671. During 2018 – 2019, the prison population was approximately 610 while renovations under the PPI were underway.

3.3 As at 31 October 2019:

- 0 prisoners are unsentenced
- 98 prisoners are serving less than 12 months
- 97 prisoners are serving between 12 months and four years.
- 451 prisoners are serving determinate sentences of longer than four years.
- 16 prisoners are serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences
- 32 prisoners are serving life sentences (non-IPP)
- 36 prisoners are serving extended determinate sentences
- 70 prisoners are identified as OCG members

3.4 The prison serves the Warwickshire and West Mercia areas for resettlement purposes. Prisoners are expected to improve their educational levels, work and train in preparation for release in the final part of their sentence. Over 75% of prisoners were involved in activities. Of those assessed on entry to the prison, under the original contract with Milton Keynes College, 70% achieved English and 61% mathematics to level 1. Since the commencement of the new contract with Novus in April 2019, 60% had achieved English and 62% mathematics at level 1.

3.5 Key providers of services are:

- Physical care provider – Care UK
- Mental health/substance misuse provider – Inclusion (Midlands Partnership NHS Trust)
- Learning and skills provider – Milton Keynes College transferred to Novus 1 April 2019
- Community rehabilitation company (CRC) – Warwickshire and West Mercia CRC
- Escort contractor – GeoAmey
- Catering services – Bidvest.
- Medication – Lloyds Pharmacy Services
- Library service – Staffordshire Library Service
- Ordering and delivering of canteen items – DHL
- Maintenance – Amey

3.6 The prison had the following accommodation units with occupancy rates at 31 October 2019:

- House 1 – A two-storey block holding 116 prisoners including seven self-isolators
- House 2 – A two-storey block holding 59 prisoners including two self-isolators (this unit is currently undergoing refurbishment hence its reduced population)
- House 3 – A two-storey block holding 116 prisoners including two self-isolators
- House 4 – A two-storey block holding 114 prisoners including three self-isolators
- House 5 – A three-storey block holding 88 prisoners including no self-isolators (currently the induction unit)
- House 6 – A two-storey block holding 35 prisoners including no self-isolators.
- House 7 – A two-storey block holding 76 prisoners including no self-isolators.
- Segregation unit – A two-storey block holding up to 10 prisoners in standard cells plus a special cell

3.7 There is a gymnasium, healthcare department, kitchen, education department, library, chaplaincy, reception, visits hall and extensive workshops and horticultural areas. Many other

departments are located either in the main administration block or elsewhere around the prison. The visitors' centre is located separately at the front of the main prison.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 Safety

4.1 HMIP findings following an inspection from 1 – 5 October 2018 reported a significant improvement in safety outcomes since the previous inspection in 2016. Safety scores moved from level 1 (poor outcomes) to a high level 2 (not sufficiently good) and 17 of the 22 recommendations made in 2016 had been achieved. The current prison action plan addresses the outstanding items. The Board has also observed significant improvements in the day-to-day atmosphere in the house units, with a proactive approach to the safety and security of prisoners by all levels of staff under a strong lead from the security management team.

	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Total
Violence prisoner/prisoner	6	8	9	10	8	11	5	10	19	15	21	15	137 (170)
Violence prisoner/staff	1	4	0	2	2	5	6	0	5	3	3	4	35 (42)
Self-harm	23	22	23	30	33	37	28	11	23	34	22	32	318 (310)
ACCT (assessment in care, custody and teamwork)	13	23	19	35	31	25	16	20	25	24	17	28	276 (291)
Use of force	17	17	31	28	26	26	24	22	32	40	29	19	311 (n/a)

(Totals in brackets represent figures for 2017 – 2018 where available)

4.2 Despite this progress, levels of safety still give some cause for concern as identified by the HMIP survey showing 25% of prisoners feeling unsafe. The data evidenced by the safer custody department does, however, show a reduction in recorded incidents of violence. The IMB has been concerned about the rising number of cases towards the end of the reporting year of ‘potting’, where urine and faeces are thrown at staff. This may just be a one-off trend and we will continue to monitor this situation. Some prisoners volunteered to the IMB on rota visits that they thought levels of violence were significant, particularly on house units 1-4. Those prisoners who reported that safety was not a concern also made comments like:

‘It’s your own fault if you don’t feel safe. You have to keep away from trouble. It’s who you associate with that’s the key’.

The Board considers security needs to be increased around prayer time across all faiths and points of worship, although it recognises that additional staffing at the medicine hatches is a positive move.

4.3 The makeup of the prison population still shows increased levels of prisoners sentenced for violent offences and those associated with organised criminal gangs (OCGs). There were 71 prisoners who were identified as OCG members as at 1 November 2018 and 70 at 31 October 2019. HMP Featherstone holds more OCGs pro rata than other prisons in the region, with the ensuing consequences for safety. The prison community is seen by these groups as an entrepreneurial opportunity, with encouragement of debt regarded as a means of achieving revenue and control. The IMB finds it particularly insidious that new prisoners are often held liable for the debts of previous cell occupants, even though they have no connections. Management is aware of these issues and is making every attempt to tackle them when intelligence is received, but it remains a problem area. Levels of self isolation are often associated with debt and the IMB recognise the detailed information collected and the robust strategy that has been implemented to try to reduce these cases.

4.4 The IMB regularly attended the monthly security meetings and confirms that comprehensive intelligence on drugs, mobile phones, violence and debt is provided to help identify current risks and trends. There were 284 seizures of drugs, 50 of ‘hooch’ and 193 of mobile phones. There is, however, good liaison with the safer custody team and other groups so that information is shared

well. This information is communicated clearly to all staff and a thorough knowledge of prisoners and their issues is demonstrated when the IMB makes enquiries about particular cases.

4.5 During the reporting year, there were 176 incidents of damage to prison property and 11 fire incidents were reported.

4.6 Ingress routes for contraband were visits/post/hospital escorts and throw-overs mainly in the area of house 5. New netting has been installed to help prevent this. Cell searches have been robust during the year, based on intelligence received, and increasing amounts of contraband confiscated. Ten full staff searches were conducted with excess medication and Apple watches detected. Biometric checks are now up and running and being used for prisoners and their visitors.

4.7 Safer custody staff meet new prisoners at induction to gain information and raise awareness of any issues before their dispersal to house units. A written and verbal notification is provided. Prisoners are given access to a telephone call and basic toiletries for their first night in prison, with night staff monitoring the first night in custody for safety concerns. This appears to be done well.

4.8 Support for vulnerable prisoners is well organised with a complement of 20 Listeners. Access to the Samaritans will be improved once all the in-cell telephones are online as there will be direct access. The crisis suite was opened on 16 occasions compared to 13 in the previous year. The documentation viewed by IMB members relating to assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) shows it is completed comprehensively. Victims of violence and self isolating prisoners are also well supported and monitored using challenge, support and intervention plans.

4.9 There were 318 incidents of self-harm compared to 310 in the previous year. A small number of prisoners were responsible for multiple incidents. Staff go the extra mile with these cases and take every opportunity to try interventions. It is not through lack of initiatives that this remains a problem. Suicide and self-harm training has been completed by most staff with some also completing the dementia awareness sessions.

4.10 There was one death in custody on 23 May 2019. It involved a prisoner who was involved in a serious incident the previous evening, which came to a speedy conclusion. The IMB was present at the serious incident and the ensuing checks on the prisoners involved. The IMB also spoke to prisoners, prison officers, the chaplaincy and healthcare staff who had been involved in the serious incident prior to the death in custody. Staff handled the matter sensitively.

4.11 Use of force meetings are held regularly and are well attended by relevant personnel under a governor lead. Body-worn cameras are now in use and the evidence is viewed at the monthly meetings together with the completed paperwork to ensure that incidents have been handled satisfactorily. The IMB considers the approach of using the evidence as a learning vehicle is an area of good practice that could be implemented elsewhere.

4.12 The IEP scheme is currently under review. Six discussion forums for staff and prisoners have been completed and a report is due shortly. Currently the issue of a lack of differentiation between IEP levels is of concern.

5 Equality and fairness

5.1 The Board monitored the prison management's approach to equality through the well-attended bi-monthly equality meetings. The Governor chaired the meetings with functional governors leading on protected characteristic themes. Issues around equality are taken seriously and given a high priority.

5.2 Comprehensive data are provided to the meeting so analysis and action can be taken on protected characteristics. Employment and training within the prison have been examined during the year to ensure fairness of allocations. A one-off exercise is currently being conducted to check accuracy of data held on the system. So far, it indicates records are incorrect and not up to date. Future checks will be undertaken at induction and by keyworkers to ensure that records are accurate.

5.3 Special events for particular interest groups have been arranged and have been well supported. These include events for foreign national prisoners as well as on suicide awareness and to mark Black History Month. Information has been well communicated via equality noticeboards with debate and interaction encouraged. Special menu choices to accompany certain events have been well received by prisoners and create a positive atmosphere.

5.4 At October 2019, the prison had a population of 64 prisoners aged 50+ (10.5%), the oldest being 75. Special activities such as walking, football, gym and book groups are provided for them. Eighty prisoners are under the age of 25 (13%). Gym work is being targeted at this group.

5.5 In April 2019, the Board undertook an older prisoners' experience project with the 59 prisoners aged 50+. There was a response rate of 66%. Some of the key findings were as follows:

- Most were in work, welcomed it and felt it was suitable for their age group.
- Prisoners were aware of services provided through noticeboard displays. However, they felt these could be better managed, as accurate, detailed information was sometimes difficult to obtain and staff lacked knowledge of what was available.
- Healthcare was a major concern for the majority of respondents (see section 8).
- Only three prisoners reported any difficulty with mobility and reaching parts of the prison they might need to access.
- Accommodation was thought to be satisfactory in house 7, with staff and other prisoners being friendly and helpful. The en-suite facilities were welcomed. Those situated in other houses felt that they were inappropriate for older prisoners as they were noisy and more antisocial. Several prisoners complained about the mattresses, which were not helpful for problems like sciatica and rheumatism.
- Six prisoners said that they felt the cold in the winter and would welcome more blankets, thermal underwear and clothing, such as hats and scarves.
- All prisoners thought that they were well treated as an older person by staff who were mostly very considerate.

5.6 The number of prisoners not identifying as heterosexual is very small – five, with 28 undisclosed in October 2019. Conversations with the prisoner representatives for sexual orientation indicate that this is likely to be due to fears of homophobia rather than personal safety. It is noted that the prison wishes to establish an atmosphere where prisoners feel comfortable about declaring their sexual orientation freely.

5.7 The chaplaincy is regularly monitored by the Board and is felt to provide excellent support to prisoners. There have been difficulties in appointing a Church of England chaplain.

5.8 In October 2019, there were 51 foreign national prisoners in HMP Featherstone (8.4%). Home Office immigration surgeries are run every six weeks and the chaplaincy also provides support. An issue has been noted regarding applications to category D prisons particularly affecting foreign national prisoners. On receiving category D approval, difficulties arise in relocation to an open prison. Where they have been relocated it appears that they are almost immediately returned to

closed conditions. This is because of the 2014 PSO, which greatly restricted access to open conditions for anyone liable to deportation or removal

5.9 The Gypsy, Roma, Traveller group meets regularly, although numbers attending meetings fluctuate. Recent special events with guest speakers have been well attended.

5.10 Issues sometimes arise for visitors with physical disabilities when accessing the visits hall, which is located on the first floor. A stair lift is available, but problems can occur when it is not correctly docked after use, meaning the battery has discharged next time it is needed. Work had started on two lifts within the prison, one for the use of visitors and one for prisoners. However, this has not been completed; work has now ceased and it is not known when it will restart.

6 Segregation/care and separation unit

6.1 The CSU occupies two floors and comprises 10 standard cells, a special cell, administration office, adjudications room, showers, kitchen, kit room, storeroom, prisoners' toilets, staff toilets, exercise yard and holding/waiting room. Despite the accommodation being old and slightly shabby, the CSU is clean and tidy.

6.2 Prisoners have daily access to outdoor exercise for a short period, showers and telephone calls. A supply of books is provided, leaflets are displayed for prisoners' information and distraction packs are readily available on request.

6.3 Board members visit the CSU regularly, speaking to all prisoners, thus giving them the opportunity to communicate freely and openly about issues. Prisoners generally are treated with respect and are complimentary about the treatment they receive from staff in the CSU and the support they are given.

6.4 Records and ACCT documents are fully completed and staff show considerable detailed knowledge about prisoners in their care. Board members are generally kept well informed of prisoners confined to the CSU or the special cell as well as those carrying out dirty protests. Occasionally there are inconsistencies when Board members are not notified, however communication has improved compared to the previous year.

6.5 At the start of the year there were occasions when the timing of segregation reviews was inconsistent, thus wasting IMB members' and healthcare staff time. This would sometimes impact on prisoners' levels of anxiety. However, the governor in charge ensured that this issue was addressed.

6.6 During the reporting year, 134 prisoners, (150 in previous year) were located to the CSU.

Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sept 19	Oct 19
2	5	11	10	18	17	12	15	9	8	12	15

The breakdown of prisoners held under prison rules were as follows:

- rule 53/4 charge with offence against discipline – 47
- cellular confinement – 17
- rule 45 good order or discipline (GOOD) – 35
- rule 45 own protection – 1

(Note: due to a new reporting system, this does not include November and December 2018 figures.)

The special cell was used on six occasions and there were five dirty protests between January and October. Prisoners on dirty protests were offered regular opportunities to terminate their protest and have a shower, a cell clean and replacement clothing.

6.7 Twelve prisoners were held in the CSU for more than 42 days, which was a cause for concern for the IMB. Several vulnerable prisoners welcomed the location as a safe haven but often they were unwilling to return to a normal house location. Some prisoners actively indulged in bad behaviour to expedite a move to the CSU, seeing it as a possible pathway to a transfer out to another prison establishment. Whilst this behaviour was actively discouraged, there were often difficulties relocating the most troublesome prisoners to other establishments so a stalemate situation ensued.

6.8 There were 2227 adjudications carried out in the reporting year (2,576 last year). The Board is still concerned that appropriate paperwork is not always completed in a timely manner. Consequently, some cases were dismissed.

The breakdown of adjudications was as follows:

Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Total
154	133	127	115	173	156	196	196	296	233	205	243	2227

Of the total number of adjudications (November 2018 – October 2019 inclusive), 566 were heard by an independent adjudicator.

6.9 The importance of prisoners having meaningful conversations with a range of staff every day cannot be underestimated. CSU staff should be commended for the firm but patient and tolerant approach they display, often under very challenging and provoking circumstances. Some prisoners have quite serious mental health problems and it is noticeable how caring and understanding segregation staff are with this very vulnerable group. All operational staff are trained in control and restraint to date.

6.10 Occasionally segregation reviews have been held in the main administration office instead of the adjudication room for a variety of reasons. This is far from ideal as there are constant distractions. Prisoners should be reviewed in a private and quiet setting well away from any intrusions or distractions.

6.11 There was significant vandalism damage to cells resulting in them being out of action and unusable for far too long. In the opinion of the Board, the CSU should at best be totally refurbished or ideally rebuilt. It has, for over 40 years, taken a steady hammering from prisoners, which is not sustainable, and we believe this is the ideal time to make the unit fit for the 21st century. Certain areas of the CSU are insufficiently covered by CCTV. This concerns the Board. We believe additional CCTV with a link to the main system should be added to improve safety and security.

6.12 The Board continues to have concerns about prisoners' property during transfer from their cells on normal location to the CSU. Property still goes missing at times. We question whether procedures are being sufficiently adhered to by staff on normal locations to bag and tag securely. We believe more work needs to be done in this area to avoid complaints from prisoners and compensation claims, which are already too high.

6.13 The segregation, monitoring and review group (SMARG) meets quarterly to review and monitor the use of segregation under Prison Service Order 1700. The adjudication standards meeting follows on from the SMARG meeting and analysis of adjudications is undertaken to identify any particular trends and whether any particular group appears to be disadvantaged.

7 Accommodation (including communication)

7.1 HMP Featherstone has a total capacity of 687 prisoners accommodated across seven house units (3.2). During the year occupancy has been reduced as house 2 was partially closed for the completion of a refurbishment under PPI. Single cell occupancy is the norm, except in house 5, where there are two prisoners to each cell. There is a small number of double cells on houses 1, 4 and 7, although the usage of these is being reviewed. Most cells have integral sanitation, power points and a light switch. There are no integral facilities in house 6, meaning prisoners are left unlocked within the houseblock at night to enable them to access facilities.

7.2 Progress on refurbishment under PPI has continued throughout the year, so many aspects of the prison's accommodation had improved since the last report. Two experienced residential governors take a strong lead in moving improvements forward. All areas have been painted, giving the ageing fabric of the buildings a bright appearance overall. Painting teams and working parties made a significant improvement to wings and communal areas. There are some motivational posters and messages displayed, but many walls in communal areas are still blank.

- House 2 has received a major refit and looks bright and welcoming. Showers are of a good standard. However, two spurs are still out of use awaiting final completion. The flooring in the communal area of this unit is also still to be replaced.
- Houses 1, 3 and 4 remain acceptable, although they would benefit from the same treatment as house 2. In these units, floors in the public spaces and spur corridors, whilst appearing in reasonable condition, display a build-up of grime resulting from surface deterioration. Major capital investment is needed as the surfaces are well past their lifespan.
- In house 6, showers, toilets and washbasins have long been a source of concern for the IMB. Regular mention has been made in rota reports of their disgusting and unhygienic state, which makes this unit almost uninhabitable. Prisoners wash dishes in the washbasins which exacerbates the problem. Funding for a £100,000 refit has been authorised and work should start shortly. The IMB considers that this house should be closed down until the work is completed. Showers in house 5 are also in an unhygienic state, with many not working.

7.3 In February 2019, the Prison Service's Operations and Systems Assurance Group (OSAG) conducted a living conditions audit. Of the 15 performance indicators, six were judged 'substantial' (green); seven 'moderate' (yellow); two 'limited' (amber) and none 'unsatisfactory' (red). The major recommendations of the audit were:

- a) to set standards and adhere to them, track repairs and remove broken items
- b) to introduce privacy screens for showers and toilets particularly, where there is double occupancy
- c) to improve pest control
- d) to refer and support those who are struggling with hygiene-related issues

7.4 A CRED programme has been ongoing during the year to replace old furniture, beds and chairs in cells. Three spurs on house 4 are complete and work is continuing on house 3. Fire retardant privacy curtains have arrived on site and were in the process of being fitted across all units for completion by Christmas 2019. All old chairs are being removed and British Standards fire safety Crib 7 replacements are in stock at the prison and will be rolled out. These replacements will address the points raised in the living conditions audit. The chairs, whilst meeting fire regulations, are similar to office chairs and not sufficiently comfortable for everyday living.

7.5 Standards of cleanliness vary from wing to wing and at different times across the prison both in inside and outside areas adjacent to spurs. Serveries, fridges and microwaves are a constant problem in some units. In the opinion of the Board, this reflects on the effectiveness or otherwise of the particular wing staff and middle management. The purchase of an industrial steam cleaner is now in progress and the Board considers this would have beneficial results on cleanliness.

7.6 Since prisoners have been allowed to wear their own clothes, the amount of prison issue kit has been reduced, although it remains readily available for those requiring it. Stock still goes missing, particularly items like towels, and custodial managers now have devolved responsibility for the

cleaning and kit budget, which gives them an opportunity, if they manage the situation better, to allocate resources to meet other accommodation needs.

7.7 Installation of in-cell telephony commenced in January 2019 and became operational for houses 5, 6 and 7 during September 2019. Houses 1-4 were due to go live by mid-October 2019. This improvement has been welcomed by prisoners spoken to by the IMB, as it gives them greater flexibility, enabling them to contact family members at more convenient times. It also provides direct access to the Samaritans. There have been some issues around the cost of calls taken from phone credit, but this should be reduced by 40% when all cells are online. Wing phones are still available. Once complete it will be possible for various prison and administrative staff to contact prisoners directly in their cells in order to answer queries and this may well alleviate frustrations with the communication systems.

7.8 The regime is well managed and consistent, with maximum time out of cell provided and little disruption. Duty governors are visible in the units, and weekend cell inspections, with a £5 incentive canteen prize for the best kept cell, are a welcome introduction to promoting standards. Despite the large number of new, inexperienced staff, the IMB is impressed with the knowledge they demonstrate of individual prisoners and their particular needs and the support they try to give. Most prisoners approached during rota visits and applications volunteered that they thought the majority of officers were helpful, fair and supportive. Staffing levels make a considerable difference to the daily lives of prisoners in the house units, but it appears that maintaining recruitment at the current level is becoming more difficult as there are other more attractive career options in the police force emerging.

7.9 Board members sampled food on a regular basis and it was found to be variable but generally satisfactory, often depending on the choice of menu. A better way of controlling uneaten food and waste needs to be addressed as it is often observed being discarded in spur bins. The appointment of a new catering manager during the year appears to be having some positive impact on updating menu options in line with prisoner comments. Guidelines have been circulated on portion control, although this is still variable. The cleanliness of serveries after mealtimes is variable. Despite guidelines, there are still issues around server clothing not being worn and this is usually through lack of vigilance by staff on duty.

7.10 The kitchen is now ageing and, despite replacements and repairs, would benefit from a complete refit, although staff cope well with what equipment they have. A capital bid for a refit has been submitted. Food service trolleys have seen replacements and a deep cleaning schedule was introduced with a biannual deep clean programme. Level 5 in the hazard analysis and critical control points system was achieved during the year which indicated improved standards and the new catering manager has undertaken a proactive approach to kitchen cleanliness and systems. Repairs to the kitchen fabric and appliances are constantly raised in IMB rota reports and are not always dealt with speedily under the contract arrangements.

7.11 There were 43 applications to the IMB with regard to prisoners' property during transfer between prisons going missing in transit or failing to follow the prisoner in a timely manner. Volumetric guidelines are sometimes ignored by dispatching prisons and transportation takes a varied approach, hence involving the prison and IMB in numerous complaints and applications. The governors introduced strict guidelines in relation to property locally and it is now coming under better control. There are still inconsistencies surrounding prisoners' property during cell clearances and whether correct protocols are followed. Procedures were introduced in April 2019 to ensure requests for access to stored property were actioned within 14 days. During the year, there was a large backlog of property that had accumulated in the reception store, but the IMB is pleased to report that after discussion with the Governor, this matter was addressed and appears to be at manageable levels.

7.12 The residential function receives strong leadership from the governing team, which has worked on a strategic approach to improving the running of the wings. Fortnightly residential meetings run by band 4 and 5 officers try to encourage ownership by prisoners of their environment. The prison council has continued in a multi-layered format, which encourages participation with prisoners.

8 Healthcare (including mental health and social care)

8.1 The head of healthcare was promoted to the post in August 2018 and settled well into the role, leading a team of dedicated healthcare professionals. The IMB is disappointed to note that in such a short space of time the incumbent has moved to a regional role and a new recruitment campaign is once again underway. On 25 September 2019, there were 15.82 full-time equivalent staff in post with 4.48 vacancies. Throughout the year, recruitment and retention has been an issue requiring backfilling of typically between one and three agency/bank staff. Practice Assist (a telephone referral service) has helped in reducing waiting times and the waiting list for GP consultations. The healthcare porter has been invaluable in reminding prisoners of their appointments and chasing up non-attenders. Visiting diagnostic services including x-rays and ultrasound and the use of telemedicine has improved the prisoner healthcare experience. Nursing care is provided between 7.45am and 6.30pm on weekdays and between 8.15am and 6pm at weekends. A wide variety of clinics run, including GP, optometry, phlebotomy, triage, physiotherapy, podiatry, discharge, wellbeing, smoking cessation, sexual health, health trainer and dressings.

8.2 All primary care staff are up to date with, or booked into, mandatory training and support. The healthcare champion, a serving prisoner based in the healthcare department, supports the healthcare team by giving advice to prisoners on basic healthcare, lifestyle and exercise. The system appears to work very well.

8.3 Waiting times for various services fluctuate, but on average they were as follows:

- GP – 1-3 weeks
- dentist – 4-7 weeks
- optician – 1-7 weeks
- physiotherapy – 3-9 weeks
- podiatry – 4-19 weeks

At times, the healthcare service breached the waiting times for podiatry, the optician and physiotherapy, however, IMB rota reports indicate extra clinics were introduced to reduce the backlog.

8.4 The total number of healthcare appointments booked across all clinics in the reporting year was 21,670. Prisoners attended 16,874 appointments. The 'did not attend' rate was 16.35%. The Board believes that the present manual appointments booking system is outdated and frustrating for prisoners. The introduction of an online booking system, similar to that in use in other prisons, would be welcomed; it would be far more efficient and significantly enhance the overall patient experience.

8.5 There were 1192 hospital escorts and 25 bed watches in the reporting year. Escorts have generally improved since our previous annual report; however, healthcare staff informed us that in the reporting year, 714 escorts were rescheduled due to a variety of reasons. Further resources are required to meet the demand, which is beyond the allocated four per day.

8.6 In January, concerns were raised because two regularly prescribed drugs, pregabalin and gabapentin, were to become schedule 3 controlled drugs from 1 April and there were worries about what impact this might have. Healthcare staff prepared well and, as a result, there were no major issues. There were 20,588 prescriptions issued. The illicit trading of prescription drugs (anti-depressants and strong analgesics) is a problem. Healthcare staff have now undertaken to complete random checks on those holding medication. There are currently three drug recovery champions. Perhaps consideration should be given to increase numbers to help combat drug use.

8.7 Prison officers are currently attending all medicine hatches in house units when medication is issued, with the exception of house 7, which is due to lack of available officers. We have no doubt

that this has reduced the potential for bullying and has resulted in a reduction in the number of assaults around medicine hatches.

8.8 There is a memorandum of understanding with Staffordshire County Council for the provision of social care for those struggling to complete daily tasks without extra help or aids. The healthcare team is continually looking for innovative ways of improving social care. One example of this is Socrates (a smart phone application), which enables patients to access vital medical information and self-help advice post release.

8.9 There are currently 19 diabetics and 13 patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Their treatment gives the Board some concerns (8.10) and this has been recognised by the healthcare department. A specialist diabetic nurse now attends HMP Featherstone, as required.

8.10 The IMB report on older prisoners' experiences (5.5) gave conflicting results to those produced by the healthcare department. Key results show:

- Of the respondents, 77% scored healthcare and its organisation generally as poor whilst optician and dental services were considered good. There was little reported use of podiatry or physiotherapy and surprisingly little mention of mental health or drug and alcohol services. One prisoner said he did not know whom to contact for drug and alcohol issues.
- There were several reported difficulties by those prisoners who were diabetic, including difficulty receiving medication in a timely way, dietary problems and lack of a diabetic nurse. Several rota reports during the year confirm this problem. Food and salads for diabetics were considered poor.
- Most complaints were about access to services. Prisoners do not have access to medical information, pharmacies etc. that may be available outside, thus making it difficult to access basics like antiseptic cream.
- The length of time to get appointments was a regularly occurring point. There was frustration about blood tests going missing and constantly having to be repeated. Health screening for over 50s was suggested by several respondents.

Recommendations made were shared with the Governor and the SMT. It is hoped that some, if not all, of those recommendations will be actioned in due course.

8.11 All prisoners receive a full healthcare assessment on arrival at HMP Featherstone in the reception area, including of their mental health, and prisoners can self-refer, or be referred by staff. There are age-appropriate health screening triggers for patients as well as NHS checks. During the reporting period there was an emphasis on blood-borne virus testing. Prisoners entering HMP Featherstone were actively encouraged to have blood tests within 72 hours to screen for HIV and hepatitis B and C. Immunisations are promoted, including for hepatitis B, MMR and meningitis C, and seasonal flu vaccinations are available.

8.12 Complaints to the healthcare department typically averaged about 15 per month. In the reporting period, the key concerns raised were around medication and external hospital appointments. Those having concerns have a face-to-face interview with healthcare staff to see if any issues can be resolved. If unresolved, a complaint would be investigated. The IMB received 19 applications concerning healthcare issues, the third highest category of complaints. Additionally, during IMB visits, prisoners frequently raised complaints about healthcare on an ad hoc basis. There appears to be a mismatch between healthcare reported complaints and IMB experiences.

8.13 Prisoners had good access to Inclusion, which provides integrated mental health and psychosocial substance misuse services. There are many support programmes available and the Board has no doubt that these programmes are very beneficial. Successes are publicised among the prison community, which we consider a positive initiative.

8.14 A new mental health service specification came out on 1 April, which meant that patients that have been referred as urgent would be seen and assessed by the mental health team within 48 hours and non-urgent referrals within five days. The prison has seven days a week, mental health/substance misuse support.

8.15 The Board would like to congratulate the healthcare team at HMP Featherstone who were runners up in the finals of the *Health Service Journal's* best partnership solution improving patient safety awards, held in Manchester in July, for the team's impressive and highly effective work to reduce drug use.

9 Education and other activities

9.1 On arrival at HMP Featherstone, all prisoners attend an induction where a list of educational, vocational and training programmes is issued, from which prisoners can select those they would like to attend.

9.2 Prisoners complete a 'pathway to progression' document, which identifies previous work experience and qualifications. They are asked to choose a minimum of three areas of work, subject to having obtained the appropriate levels of maths and English.

9.3 On completion of their contract, Milton Keynes College achieved certification levels of 88%, slightly lower than the 95% achieved last year. However, this represented only an eight-month period, as in April 2019, the educational contract changed to a new supplier, Novus. The failure of the new contractor Novus to perform means that in the first seven months, it has only been able to achieve 56.9% of its contract delivery, which is a considerable disappointment. There are major concerns both from the establishment and the IMB about the level of provision provided during the transition period. Some courses have been stopped due to lack of recruitment of appropriate staff. Six months into the contract, Novus has submitted a development plan to address some of the areas of concern. The inability to deliver on the contract has had a detrimental impact on provision for prisoners and raises questions about the design, tendering and awarding process of outsourced contracts.

9.4 During the year, the IMB carried out a monthly shadowing process of two new prisoners entering HMP Featherstone from induction to education and industrial training. The objective was to follow the process in order to understand and establish how well prisoners progressed in obtaining qualifications and whether they are prepared for their eventual release. Both prisoner 'A' and 'B' initially appeared positive about their experiences and commented that the environment within HMP Featherstone was satisfactory and they were being supported towards their eventual release.

9.5 At the end of September 2019, there were 556 enrolments on education qualifications by Novus compared to 1395 enrolments by Milton Keynes College. A total of 1339 educational certificates have been presented to prisoners since the start of the academic year. All the courses offered within the educational environment are accredited and work skills are recognised by future employees.

9.6 Numeracy and literacy continue to be core educational subjects, and all prisoners must have level 1 before being eligible for employment within the industries environment. Overall, combined English and maths success for the year has been 61.3%. At the end of September 2019, of the 275 new reception prisoners, 109 were assessed in English and 104 in maths. Hence 106 were not assessed in English and 171 in maths. Overall assessment results for the reporting year were 60.4% in English and 62% in maths. There appears to be no clear reason why there were large numbers of new reception prisoners who were unassessed. This can only be due either to no assessment being carried out or because they already had the appropriate levels 1 and 2 in maths and English when arriving at HMP Featherstone.

9.7 All prisoners are invited 12 weeks prior to release to attend Jobcentre Plus. This allows them to apply to job clubs, write a current curriculum vitae along with other benefits to support them on their release.

9.8 Staffordshire Libraries along with the Shannon Trust continue to support prisoners with their reading, Open University courses, driving theory and the Six Book Challenge. Throughout the year events have been held to celebrate reading skills, achievements gained by prisoners, along with the annual ceremonies. where skills can be practised, such as Christmas and Remembrance Sunday services.

9.9 In April 2019, an achievements day was held celebrating qualifications, outstanding achievements, song writing, choirs, Rail Track completions, attended by various employers, including Timpson's which continues to be a main provider of jobs on release.

9.10 During the last 12 months, three prisoners have gained degree qualifications through the Open University. It is encouraging to find that a further 12 prisoners are currently in the process of working towards a degree qualification.

9.11 In 2019, five new activity places were created. The work area is called 'gateway to reintegration', which is aimed at capturing the harder to reach individuals and helping them reintegrate back into the regime. This will be incorporated into the self-isolators policy.

10 Work, vocational training and employment

10.1 The engineering and enterprise facilities at HMP Featherstone have continued to be busy throughout 2018 – 2019, with external commercial sales amounting to £96,870 for the year. This included sales to outside companies such as Black Ada, Boss Design, Fabweld, Express Polymers and ECS. Internal Prison Service work amounted to £1,236,998. HMP Featherstone continues to support all prisoners by providing them with a wide range of working activities leading to qualifications and possible work opportunities on release.

10.2 The wide range of vocational courses are aligned to employment opportunities that exist externally, such as painting and decorating, carpentry, tiling and motor mechanics. Ensuring that all prisoners have basic maths and English at level 1 before starting on any vocational training has been given a high priority this year and this has been integrated into the courses. The change in the educational contract appears to jeopardise the progress that was made during the reporting year

10.3 Railtrack continues to give its support with vocational and practical training on track laying and track maintenance. In 2019, the introduction of a new bespoke performance manufacturing operation course commenced, with a national vocational qualification in warehousing and distribution. A new venture with Bridgestone Tyres to create an academy for tyre fitting was also developed.

10.4 The enterprise work area consists of various manufacturing opportunities, including sewing, packing and quality assurance processes. There are opportunities to develop a range of manufacturing skills whilst working within this area, with prisoner orderlies being used to carry out quality assurance checks and complete documentation to an agreed standard.

10.5 A new tube bender has been introduced along with appropriate tooling and guarding, the operation and training will be covered with the appropriate course. This has generated development work that will ultimately lead to contracts.

10.6 The print shop continues to manufacture t-shirts and mugs and a variety of commercial merchandise. This workshop has now become a public sector prison industry (PSPI) with orders added via Tharstons. This continues to be a growing resource as it is the only department in the prison estate that provides these kinds of goods. However, there have been problems in maintaining a suitably qualified staff base and there is a questionable allocation of appropriately skilled prisoners who can take advantage of the opportunity. It could provide an excellent entry into a more modern skills base but has underutilised potential. Prisoners are sometimes sitting doing nothing because they are unable to work the equipment.

10.7 Textiles have continued to produce in excess of 50,000 t-shirts as well as producing donkey jackets and sweatshirts for prisoners. There is a new line of jackets in progress with a change in colour to make them more distinctive on CCTV.

10.8 Consideration is being given, subject to finance and location, for the provision of a barista facility for staff use, which will provide selected enhanced prisoners with an opportunity to gain a level 2 qualification.

10.9 There is a recycling team that collects items from all areas of the prison to sort into categories. There is also a garden party, which maintains the landscape of the internal prison garden area, completing maintenance tasks, as and when required by the season timetable. The grounds at HMP Featherstone are quite extensive and the IMB feels it is a pity that more use cannot be made of the prisoner resource in maintaining and developing the garden rather than this work being contracted out to Amey.

10.10 Throughout the year, there was a party of prisoners who were allocated to painting the pedestrian walkways, residential units and prisoner cells, as part of the decency agenda for prisoners. Prisoners have fully engaged with the work and this has led to a sense of pride in seeing their accomplishments. It has also been greatly welcomed by prisoners generally.

10.11 Performance hours for industries are 28 hours per week of purposeful activity. This includes engineering (welding, press braking, tube-bending, laser cutting etc.), graphic design, print, textiles, cleaning, and motor vehicle maintenance. The national target required for attendance is 80% with HMP Featherstone running at 89%. Whilst these opportunities are on offer, the IMB frequently observes inactivity in the workplaces. Sometimes this is because there are insufficient flows of work or inappropriate levels of tutoring staff, but often it is due to inadequate supervision and lack of work ethic.

10.12 To introduce wider prisoner engagement and help confidence building, develop interpersonal skills, positive behaviour and attitudes, HMP Featherstone has introduced a Beating Time Choir, Quill Choir, song writing courses and motivational and inspirational workshops with input from visiting mentors and organisations.

10.13 HMP Featherstone created a total of 1339 certificates throughout 2018 – 2019, achieved in both morning and afternoon sessions. This is approximately the same as the previous year. Of these certificates, 161 relate to awards for motor vehicle maintenance, performance manufacturing, graphic design, painting and decorating and tiling, along with construction, all of which relate to core skills needed for outside employment once prisoners are released.

10.14 Throughout the year, the IMB has attended as many events as possible. Not only does it allow members to link with the prisoners but hopefully demonstrates that the IMB also takes an interest in the progress and achievements gained by the prisoners.

11 Resettlement preparation

11.1 Following HMIP's inspection on 1 – 5 October 2018, there were a number of recommendations made for this area. HMIP considered the strategic management of the area to be underdeveloped. The subsequent HMP Featherstone action plan addressed these concerns and the majority have been implemented or are in hand. It is a complex portfolio and the observation of the IMB is that, whilst many initiatives are in place, they provide a confusing picture for prisoners.

11.2 Considerable progress was made during the year on the roll out of phase 1 of the OMiC model with between 80-90% delivery, although prison monitoring figures have recently seen a downturn. It was unfortunate for HMP Featherstone that the leading governor moved to a regional post during the year and temporary arrangements were in place until another governor returned from maternity leave. Despite the disruptions, the SMT managed to keep the initiatives driving forward. The IMB has followed the journey of five prisoners, their keyworkers and offender managers during the year with the purpose of gaining feedback on prisoners' knowledge and experience of the process. The evidence from these qualitative discussions indicates mixed experiences, often depending on the enthusiasm, empathy and quality of the keyworker intervention.

11.3 The IMB is pleased that after a long notice period from HMP Sudbury, a senior probation officer is now installed, ready for the roll out of OMiC phase 2. By November, it is anticipated that the complement of 5.5 experienced probation officers will be in place thus allowing for improvements in sentence plans.

11.4 The seven pathways to reducing reoffending are well publicised among incoming prisoners and the induction process located on house 5 has been invigorated. The officers supervising that process should be commended in having given thoughtful and caring attention to the needs of new prisoners, particularly those who appear vulnerable. The IMB has followed six prisoners through their early days experience and received positive reports about information received and options open to them. This positive atmosphere unfortunately has not always persisted once relocated on a wing.

11.5 The resettlement office with a full-time accommodation officer is well located on house 5 where prisoners until recently spend their last few weeks in custody thus enabling them to access the contacts they need. The follow-up undertaken by the IMB indicated that all 15 prisoners spoken to had received an interview within 12 weeks of their release date and accommodation had been arranged or was suitable for them. Once a sentence has been completed the prison is not always informed of the accommodation destination, however, every effort has been made to try to ensure residency has been secured.

11.6 Transfers to category D prisons appear to be working smoothly with about 60 reviews being completed each month. Approximately a quarter of prisoners receive approval. However, preparation for category D is weak and prisoners spoken to appeared to have little idea of what might be expected of them once moved.

11.7 Access to bank accounts for the 15 prisoners followed appeared to be patchy. Whilst forms were completed, at least five prisoners did not know whether they had been successful in opening an account before they were released. When the outside Citizens Advice officer was absent, there seemed to be a backlog in the system and no-one to pick up on the completions. Concerns were expressed about how they were going to access accounts for universal credit.

11.8 The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) team appeared to support the pathways well. There was support in place to complete CVs and some excellent links with employers, such as Timpson, Bridgestone Tyres and Greggs. Railtrack had made 32 job offers to prisoners and provided an excellent opportunity to build a stable life outside the prison.

11.9 The provision of behaviour orientated courses, such as Resolve, Chrysalis Lite, Becoming Respectful etc. are welcomed, although there are still concerns about the timely nature of these programmes and how accessible they are, given the demand. The waiting list for Resolve can be as many as 70 prisoners. Staff shortages have been detrimental to the smooth running of programmes.

Plans are in progress to be able to offer continuous improvement Kaizen training to address the needs analysis undertaken for long-term violent prisoners. It is hoped this will commence in April 2020.

11.10 The substance misuse department has proactively addressed aspects of mental health and substance abuse with a wide variety of programmes running, adapted to the particular needs of the prison community. The IMB was encouraged to see letters of thanks from prisoners who had successfully completed programmes and welcomed the events which were held to celebrate success.

11.12 HMP Featherstone works hard to provide a supportive family environment and the maintenance of family contacts through a variety of interventions that are popular, such as Storybook and DVD Dads and Activities Designed by Dad. It is noteworthy that on issues of poor behaviour where younger prisoners are involved, parents have been contacted and invited to engage in discussions about how things might be improved. Family days for lifers are being introduced, which addresses a weakness highlighted by HMIP.

11.13 The visits hall provides a clean, warm and welcoming environment with an adequate snack bar for the purchase of refreshments. Family engagement is positively encouraged through both normal visits and the 12 family days each year, including Christmas, when children can engage in fun activities. The Board welcomes adjustments to the visiting arrangements, allowing additional sessions for weekends, thus providing a better opportunity for access and causing less disruption to the working week activities.

11.14 The IMB has followed the visitors' experience from the reception centre, through security and into the visits hall. Feedback indicated that visitors felt they were treated sensitively, particularly when accompanied by children so that a pleasant atmosphere was created for their visit.

C The work of the Independent Monitoring Board

12.1 At the end of the reporting period the Board had a composition of seven members, one of whom was completing the induction period. Recruitment campaigns were disappointing as, of the three candidates taking up the appointment, two left almost immediately. Despite great efforts to circulate information about the vacancies, public awareness of the IMB and its work is scant. It is difficult to recruit those within the working population and from under-represented groups.

12.2 Rota visits were carried out weekly to different areas of the prison against a matrix to ensure full coverage of monitoring. A written report was circulated to all other members of the Board as well as to the governing governor.

12.3 Board members attended good order and discipline (GOOD) reviews in the CSU twice a week, to ensure that prisoners were treated fairly, processes adhered to and correct paperwork was recorded.

12.4 Board members attended a sample of adjudications of prisoners either before the duty governor or the independent adjudicator.

12.5 Board members dealt with applications from prisoners twice weekly to ensure timely completion.

12.6 Twelve monthly Board meetings were held in the reporting year where key concerns were discussed and the governing governor responded.

12.7 As part of a programme of ongoing training and personal development, the Board invited a range of prison staff and prisoners to speak on relevant topics and members also participated in prison training events. The chair-elect attended the Board leaders' course held in Birmingham, a two-day strategic management planning event at Lilleshall Conference Centre in April 2019 and the national conference held in Telford. The newly-appointed member completed the new members' course in Leicester.

12.8 Members attended a wide range of prison meetings as observers in order to gain a wider understanding of prison issues. These included: SMT, security, safer custody, visitors' centre forum, health and safety, business development, SMARG, prison council, healthcare, rehabilitative and positive culture, use of force, sustainable development, drug strategy and full staff briefings.

12.9 The chair/vice-chair attended the West Midlands area chairs' meetings. Members also attended Board meetings of other prisons in the region and invited their Board members to attend HMP Featherstone Board meetings to share development ideas. The chair/vice-chair gave several presentations to newly recruited prison officers on the work of the IMB as part of their induction.

12.10 Board members attended four serious incidents when the command suite was opened. All were concluded within a few hours.

12.11 The Board appreciates provision of good facilities and the positive working relationship it has with the governing governor, his SMT, all the prison staff and prisoners who assist us in carrying out the monitoring role.

12.12 The Board wishes to thank Melissa Jewitt, the IMB clerk during the reporting period, for her hard work and efficiency behind the scenes, supporting our monitoring role within the prison.

Board statistics	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	315
Total number of segregation reviews attended	170

D Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	2
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	8
C	Equality	4	6
D	Purposeful activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	9	8
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	3	11
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	4	14
F	Food and kitchens	2	6
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	19	19
H 1	Property within this establishment	14	21
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	43	58
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	4
I	Sentence management including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	26	35
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	16	16
K	Transfers	9	15
L	Miscellaneous	20	14
	Total number of IMB applications	174	237