



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

**HMP DOVEGATE
for the period
1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019**

Published April 2020

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Section 1

Statutory role

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and immigration removal centre to be monitored by an independent Board, appointed by the Minister for Justice, from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (a) 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
- (b) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- (c) 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 prison and every part of the prison, and also to the prison's records.

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP Dovegate is committed to treating all with respect and fairness, regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, religion, belief, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Section 2

Executive summary

HMP Dovegate is a privately managed establishment, operated by Serco. Board members have had free and unconstrained access to all areas of the prison and had the full cooperation and support of the director, his senior management team and all prison officers and staff. This has been greatly appreciated, as has the help, guidance and support given by the Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) controller/acting controller and their team.

In compiling this report, it should be noted that the Board has, again, been very short of members during the reporting year, and some areas have to undertake only limited monitoring of the operation of the prison.

Overall judgement

The positive progress identified in the previous two annual reports has continued in this reporting year.

Overall, standards of cleanliness and tidiness are very good and the general atmosphere is calm and settled, with relationships between managers, staff and residents generally good.

Key areas for review were:

Three house blocks

Work/education and other activities

Staffing levels/recruitment

Therapeutic community (TC)

Segregation

Equality and fairness

Healthcare

House blocks

House blocks 1 and 2 house sentenced residents, including those on long-term sentences, who are all engaged in employment or education, or have retired. Residents in house blocks 1 and 2 have more opportunities for purposeful activities and have a less restricted regime than those on house block 3. House block 2, upper wing K, is a social responsibility unit (SRU), and houses up to 30 residents who are considered to be violent and/or antisocial. The wing has dedicated officers (12) and psychologists (three) working with the residents on one-to-one and group sessions to improve their behaviour.

House block 3 is for sentenced residents who are unemployed, and awaiting allocation to employment or education, if appropriate; first night residents; remand residents or those with sentences of four years or less; and vulnerable prisoners.

The Therapeutic Community is housed in three blocks, completely separate from the main prison with a maximum of 200 residents

Work/education

The reorganisation of house blocks in the reporting year 2017/18 was to help achieve full employment or education for sentenced prisoners, with a target figure of 95%. Although the amount and quality of purposeful activity has improved, the target figure has not been met, and is at around 89/90% most weeks. (The target figure of 95% is now being met, but not consistently, in the new reporting year.)

The four workshops are all operational, and a new call centre (25 jobs) opened at the end of the reporting year. A total of 656 are in full-time employment (including the call centre), up from 579 in the previous year (+11.7%).

For this reporting year, the numbers in employment/education increased by 110 (+12%), from 812 to 924 prisoners. Only 36 residents (excluding those under in patient healthcare, in segregation, in therapeutic care or in retirement) were without purposeful activity.

Staff levels/recruitment

Dovegate staffing levels remain high, with good retention rates. Although the level of young staff is high, the level of inexperience is reducing.

In this reporting year, no senior managers or staff were seconded overseas or to other prisons, so disruption was minimal.

Therapeutic community (TC)

The Board has not been able to carry out any in-depth monitoring of the TC in this reporting year. However, it is visited weekly and, generally, members find a calm and settled atmosphere there, with mainly positive feedback from staff and residents.

Healthcare

Healthcare services are provided by Care UK, which subcontracts to The Midland Partnership Foundation Trust to deliver mental health services. Healthcare services were good, with the wait for dental appointments further reduced from 25 days to seven days. The waiting time to see a GP has reduced from 12 days to seven days. Urgent appointments to see a GP are available on the same day, and only 5% of internal appointments are missed, owing, mainly, to not having more staff in post to manage, prison lockdowns or appointments clashing.

In addition, external appointment escorts have been increased from four to six daily, resulting in very few cancellations of external hospital appointments.

Segregation

The reorganisation and revamp of the segregation unit, which started in 2016/17, has been completed and all the changes have been implemented.

The unit is managed professionally, with the objective of having residents in segregation for the minimum time necessary. The average stay is between 7 and 14 days and only on very rare occasions is a prisoner segregated for longer than 42 days.

Equality and fairness

Equality and fairness was identified as an area of 'special interest' by the Board, which has looked in depth at the running of this sector, including diversity equality action team (DEAT) meetings; forum groups (monthly resident meetings with a staff lead); and equality legislation and adjudications.

Positive findings 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019

- Stability of prison improved
- Staff levels high
- Use of new psychoactive substances well down
- Waiting times to see GP and dentist (well) down
- Facilities management good
- Number of resident complaints down
- Number of violent incidents down (–24.2%)
- Number of resident on staff assaults down (–30.8%)
- Number of self-harm incidents down (–11.8%)

Negative findings 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019

- Inconsistent implementation of the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme
- Targets not met for purposeful activity
- Deaths in custody increase
- Increase in the number of finds, and use, of illicit alcohol
- Apparent differences in outcomes for prisoners from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background in relation to segregation and adjudications

Conclusion

The Board has seen the positive progress identified in the last two annual reports continue in this reporting year. The prison has, in the main, been settled and calm.

The reorganisations, changes and new initiatives started last year, including Offender Management in Custody (OMiC), segregation, the TC and the SRU have all continued to progress positively.

New initiatives and changes, including decency management, resident representatives/Listeners/mentors, work opportunities and prison standards, have all been positively implemented or improved.

Main areas for development

To the Minister

All three points in the last two years' annual reports, i.e. property transfers, ageing population and mental health issues are still relevant and outstanding.

To HMPPS

With regard to property, we believe that the IMB Management Board is raising Boards' concerns with HMPPS about the need for a new process to deal with residents' property issues when moving between establishments. This concern is shared by the IMB at Dovegate. When will HMPPS improve and update the way in which property is transferred between prisons?

To the Director

- to achieve consistency in incentives and earned privileges (IEP) reviews
- to reduce illicit alcohol finds and use
- to upgrade the healthcare inpatient unit bathroom
- to provide a consulting room for clinical interventions in the healthcare inpatient unit
- to make sure that every officer on the CSU has a working body camera available when signing in, and has it clearly displayed/worn.
- To review the apparent inequalities with black and mixed-race residents on adjudications and Rule 45 reviews.

Section 3

Description of the establishment

HMP Dovegate is located near Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, and is a category B training prison holding male residents aged 21 and over.

The main prison consists of convicted residents, mainly serving determinate sentences, a remand facility and about 130 local prison places.

There is also a purpose-built TC, which takes repeat and mainly violent offenders, who come from any prison in the country and volunteer to address their offending behaviour through group and individual therapy. All residents go through an assessment, to make sure they are suitable for the TC.

The certified normal accommodation of the main prison is 960, and that of the TC is 200, giving a combined total of 1,160.

The number of residents held in the main prison over the reporting year has been at, or very close to, the operational capacity.

The main prison consists of three house blocks. The two original house blocks (1 and 2) each have five wings, built around a central 'bubble'. Each wing has two floors, with each floor having 20 cells, four showers, a food serving area and a laundry on the ground floor. There are fixed tables and chairs, a pool table and exercise machines in the recreation area, plus an outside exercise yard. Cells in these two house blocks were designed for single occupancy and have an in-cell wash basin and toilet.

A further 20 cells are larger, and can accommodate two residents.

The new house block (3) has its wings built around a control 'bubble'. This block has a dedicated drug treatment wing. The cells there are larger, complying with European Prison Rules standards, and have integral showers. All the wings have the same communal facilities as in blocks 1 and 2.

All cells have a telephone installed, and all calls are security monitored.

House block 1	Category B Trainer
A wing	Long-term sentences (over 10 years and enhanced IEP status)
B/C/D/E wings	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
House block 2	Category B Trainer
F wing	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
G wing	Long-term sentences (over 10 years and enhanced IEP status)
H wing	Employed/unemployed/retired
J wing	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
K wing (lower)	Over 50 years of age/pre-and post-TC
K wing (upper)	SRU
House block 3	Local prison
L wing	Unemployed sentenced residents awaiting allocation to employment/education
M wing	First night centre and interventions and substance misuse team (ISMT) detoxification
N wing	Prisoners sentenced for 12 months or less/in resettlement period (could also be in employment/education)
P wing	Vulnerable residents (those convicted of a sexual offence)

The TC, which is separated from the main prison by an internal fence, consists of three house blocks, all having single occupancy cells, with in-cell toilets and showers. It shares some of the main prison facilities – for example, the health centre and gymnasium.

ATMs (automated teller machines) are installed in all the residential areas, allowing residents to check their accounts, order meals, make doctor/dentist appointments, and many other functions.

The prison has its own kitchen and laundry.

The health centre has 11 cells for inpatients, and the usual range of outpatient clinics.

The prison has a large education and training facility (Dovegate College), four workshops, a recycling centre, a gymnasium and multi-faith centre.

The library services are provided by Serco, in partnership with the Staffordshire Library Services.

Vocational training is run by two subcontractors:

- Construction and Skills Solutions (CSS)
- N-ergy

The prison has a contract with Serco Integrated Services for facilities management.

The prison has well maintained and attractive gardens, with productive vegetable and flower growing areas.

A hedgehog preservation scheme began in summer 2018. Constructed by residents it was hoped that 'HMP Hog Gate' would help increase the population of this endangered species but unfortunately all the hedgehogs appear to have escaped!

EVIDENCE SECTIONS 4 – 10

4. Safety

	1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018	1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019	
Number of self-harm incidents	510	450	-11.8%
Number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened	719	697	-3.1%
Number of resident-on-resident assaults	179	183	+0.2%
Number of resident-on-staff assaults	65	45	-30.8%
Number of violent incidents	297	225	-24.2%
Number of deaths in custody	7	5	

The number of violent incidents has reduced by 24.2%, and of assaults by residents on staff has reduced by 30.8% in this reporting year – a significant improvement on 2017/18 returns. The number of resident-on-resident assaults has remained on a par with last year.

The number of ACCT documents opened is slightly down (by 3.1%) on last year but, in the Board's view, the ACCT process is being well managed.

The number of self-harm incidents continues to reduce year on year (-11.8%) but there continues to be a small number of continuous and prolific self-harmers who inflate the figures.

During the reporting period, there were five deaths in custody. One was by natural causes, one was self-inflicted and three are still to go to inquest.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

The DEAT, chaired by the Director, meets monthly and is attended, among others, by resident equalities team leaders and, on a rolling basis, other resident equalities representatives. In addition, a member of the (HMPPS) controller's team is also present. It is run in a purposeful manner, with presentations on detailed statistics for adjudications, IEP levels, use of force in relation to ethnicity, and discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) in relation to ethnicity and other protected characteristics.

The figures by ethnicity for residents segregated in the CSU (under Rules 45 and 55) are collected but not presented at the DEAT meeting. The second table below suggests that they should be, as the over-representation of black/mixed-race residents is evident in both.

There are two equalities orderlies who are impressive in their knowledge and the way they conduct themselves. There are also 20 equalities representatives (two specifically for Travellers), who have to apply for their posts, must be on the enhanced level of the IEP scheme because of the trust levels involved, and are vetted by the prison. These positions provide a positive way for residents to use verbal, written and social skills while in prison.

Along with the monthly DEAT meetings, the prison runs a number of forums (focus groups), comprising monthly resident meetings with a staff lead, relating to the protected characteristics of equality legislation (age; disability; race; LGBT+; and religion or belief; and also veterans in custody; foreign nationals; and Travellers). Residents can apply to attend these meetings.

The chairing of these meetings has sometimes been rather weak, with the staff lead not sufficiently aware of the importance of room organisation to ensure that everyone can participate easily, and the need to take charge of the discussion. There is now awareness of the need to run them more effectively and record minutes.

Meetings have sometimes been cancelled at short notice, or the staff lead has been substituted with a member of staff with little idea of what happened in the previous meeting. However, these are valuable meetings which allow the specific concerns of the various groups to be addressed, and be raised at the DEAT meetings via the equalities representatives. Residents also come up with positive ideas for special days, and so forth.

The Board would like to see the profile of these meetings raised and strengthened.

The number of new adjudications by ethnicity are collected and presented at DEAT meetings. It is the Board's view that these are insufficiently scrutinised over time. The numbers of new adjudications by ethnicity are shown below, the figures showing the deviation by percentage of that ethnic group in the prison as a whole.

NEW ADJUDICATIONS

	White	Asian	Black/mixed race
MARCH	-3.20	-3.55	10.99
APRIL	-0.10	-6.10	10.30
MAY	6.07	-9.41	5.20
JUNE	0.30	-4.80	7.20
JULY	-2.75	-6.19	14.72
AUGUST	3.70	-3.84	5.80
SEPTEMBER	-1.10	-3.84	8.80
TOTAL	2.92	-37.73	63.01
MONTHS	7.00	7.00	7.00
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DEVIATION	0.42	-5.39	9.00

Black and mixed-race residents are more likely to be given an adjudication (+9.0%), while Asian prisoners are significantly less likely (-5.39%).

The figures for the number of residents on Rule 45 in the CSU show a similar disparity for black and mixed-race residents, who, on average, constitute 21.5% of the prison population but represent 34.21% of the Rule 45 occupants of the CSU over the same six-month period.

Segregation/Rule 45

	W1	Asian	Black/mixed race
APRIL	6	0	2
MAY	16	1	19
JUNE	20	0	14
JULY	20	0	7
AUGUST	20	0	8
SEPTEMBER	17	0	2
TOTAL	99	1	52
PERCENTAGE	65.13	0.66	34.21

The possible reasons for these discrepancies warrant investigation by the Management Team.

The number of DIRFs received remains steady (six in April, 12 in June, 10 in July, 10 in August and 10 in September). When the equality representatives are involved on the wing, the resident with a complaint is likely to channel his complaint via the appropriate route. The procedure for dealing with DIRFs is robust, with the custodial managers investigating and the Director examining outcomes.

Independent scrutineers randomly check responses to DIRFs. If a manager's responses were found to be inadequate in relation to the sign-off/quality control checklist, the equality manager would take the appropriate action.

The chaplaincy team consists of three full-time (Anglican, Muslim, Free Church) staff and two Roman Catholic priests sharing a full-time post; in addition, all other faiths (Quaker, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu, Church of the Latter Day Saints, Pagan, Jehovah's Witness, Judaism) are provided for by part-time or visiting representatives.

Chaplains always visit residents individually on their arrival in the prison, and religious festivals are celebrated as appropriate.

An obvious omission, required by Prison Service Instruction 05/2016, is provision for the many non-faith residents. There is no humanist representative in the prison, although there are residents who would prefer their emotional and personal support needs to be met by someone who is not religious.

It is unfortunate that the education provision for vulnerable residents has been reduced; since August 2019, they have not been able to make use of the education space in the TC because of the regime change there. Mathematics and English are now taught on the wing and information technology classes only on Friday. However, from a potential class of 15, only three were regular attendees, which made the class hardly viable. It is to be hoped that the promised laptop computers will be provided soon.

There are commendable attempts by the prison to raise awareness of autism. The module in the initial staff training package has gone but there are opportunities for staff to learn more about the condition in one of the regular Tuesday lock-down training sessions. New residents are asked whether they have a diagnosis or whether others have thought they have autism; education, wing and healthcare staff report if they suspect that a resident might have this condition. The prison is trying to gain autism accreditation, which necessitates providing adequate support across a number of areas.

At induction, 293 residents self-identified as having special educational needs. Educational assessment in the early days in the prison identifies those with learning difficulties. All residents are expected to reach level 1 in numeracy and literacy before they can be employed; unfortunately, there is no provision as yet to embed learning into vocational work.

Falling under the equality umbrella, family days dedicated to the Traveller community took place in December 2018, and February and June 2019, with residents involved in the planning of these events. They were highly valued and praised by the residents.

In June 2019, a successful foreign nationals event was held, with embassy staff invited. Another is planned for later in 2020.

Black History Month has been marked by a series of events, spread over a wider period.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

Following last year's reorganisation of the CSU, improvements continued into the current reporting year. Changes relating to unlocking procedures, planned intervention, fixed meeting times, use of spontaneous control and restraint, on-time paperwork and keeping resident time spent in segregation to a minimum, have all been implemented and generally adhered to well.

The Board has not received any written claims of assault by residents against CSU staff in this reporting year.

However, improvements can, in the Board's view, be made in the following areas:

- The CSU still does not have its own stock of body-worn cameras and batteries, and cameras are not always available to all CSU staff.
- Purposeful activity on the unit can be improved, with a larger and more varied selection of books, games and so forth being made available. In addition, it is the view of the Board that outside exercise equipment in the CSU exercise yard would be beneficial to a number of the residents.

The relationship between staff and residents on the CSU is, in the main, positive and proactive.

7. ACCOMMODATION

HMP Dovegate is less than 20 years old and has a good standard of accommodation and facilities. However, natural wear and tear is evident in certain areas and has been reported through the Board.

Standards of cleanliness and tidiness, across all areas of the prison, have improved significantly in this reporting year. A decency manager was appointed, responsible for making sure that all identified issues to the fabric of the prison are resolved quickly. In addition, each house block follows the same processes for cleaning, maintenance, resident welfare, and so forth, to achieve a positive consistency throughout the prison.

Areas identified for action in last year's report:

- Defective water dispensers – all now replaced
- Broken tables and chairs – being replaced when required
- CSU showers/toilets not fit for purpose – completely revamped and now fit for purpose
- Healthcare main waiting room with no effective toilet hand-washing and -drying facilities – waiting room redecorated and refurbished with a new toilet and washbasin, although drying facilities still outstanding
- Substandard floor covering on wings, including showers and cells – new floor covering throughout.
- Closed-circuit television system being reviewed – system now completely updated.

In addition, the following has occurred:

- All wings store/cleaning cupboards have been decorated and reorganised to meet required health and safety standards
- New signage throughout the prison
- House block general areas redecorated and lighting improved
- New boilers installed.

Areas still needing improvement include:

- Showers – too many have faulty on/off buttons and are not working
- Window vents at the end of wings often not able to be opened or shut
- Healthcare residential block showers and bath not fit for purpose
- No hand-drying facilities in the healthcare waiting room.

8. HEALTHCARE (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

Healthcare and social care are provided by Care UK, which subcontracts to Midland Partnership Foundation Trust for the delivery of mental health services. The head of healthcare has been in post since July 2017, providing stability to the department. Recruitment and retention have improved and there are now only seven vacancies across the healthcare team.

An integrated quality assurance and improvement meeting is held monthly, which, as well as healthcare staff from all disciplines, is attended by the head of safer custody, a member of the controller team and, where possible, a Board member. These meetings are well run and are a positive point of contact between the Serco senior management team and Care UK.

A major improvement to the issue of shortage of clinical space has taken place by the relocation of the mental health and ISMT teams to the old library, freeing up four new clinical rooms in the healthcare unit.

Residents on arrival receive satisfactory written information on health services, and resident Insiders reinforce this during induction. Care UK has its own complaints and concerns system, and the Board continues to receive a number of healthcare applications.

Nursing staff are available 24 hours a day and residents have access to all primary care services. They can have emergency appointments, and can book into triage clinics on each house block or the walk-in centre in the healthcare unit every day.

There is a positive attitude to health and wellbeing across the prison. Eighteen 'healthcare champions' have access to scales and blood pressure monitors, and can measure body mass index and give support and encouragement. Yoga is offered twice monthly, as are mindfulness sessions and acupuncture.

The issue of first night residents and residents arriving with substance misuse problems being placed in accommodation other than the designated first night and detoxification wing has improved dramatically since we last reported. Reception, healthcare and the relevant wing staff liaise more closely now, so that new arrivals are allocated to the correct wing.

After several years of reporting the unsatisfactory state of the main waiting room and toilet, some refurbishment took place during this reporting year. New cushioned seating was put on the benches and a new toilet and washbasin were installed. However, despite the Board mentioning repeatedly that there are no hand-drying facilities available, this is still the case.

The inpatient unit is an 11-cell block within the healthcare unit. It is often near or up to capacity with residents with physical ailments, as well as mental health issues. Residents awaiting transfer to secure mental health accommodation are also housed here. It still has no consulting room available for clinical interventions.

The unit is now well decorated, clean and bright. A Board member was involved in encouraging staff to make sure that the cleaner had the correct equipment and cleaning fluids to clean the unit to the required standard for a medical environment. The kitchen in the association room has been replaced, and this room is now much more welcoming. The communal shower and bathroom are no longer fit for purpose; there is paint flaking from the walls, and the showers are too narrow to allow wheelchair access. Plans to provide a wet room were approved in January 2019 but no work has yet started.

The Board was concerned that, following the redeployment of the member of the prison staff involved in therapeutic activities in the unit, these had been discontinued (this is commented on more fully under the section on purposeful activity). However, therapeutic activities have now been reinstated, with a dedicated officer running the activity.

Healthcare staff supervise yoga classes and mindfulness sessions, and healthcare champions visit on Saturdays to engage with residents.

Although there are limitations to this unit, the Board recognises the dedication of the custodial and healthcare staff, who know the residents there and deal well with their often-complex needs.

In particular, during this reporting year, a resident suffering from a terminal illness chose to have end-of-life care in the unit, rather than be transferred to a hospice. The care he received was exceptional, and his family was able to visit and support him in his final days.

Healthcare staff and a Board member attend segregation reviews. Concerns have been raised in the past that healthcare staff were unprepared at these reviews, and had no knowledge of the resident under review. In this reporting year, there has been a dramatic improvement: healthcare staff are now more informed of the residents' backgrounds before the review and have up-to-date ACCT information.

Healthcare staff have been supportive in response to concerns about, or with information needed to help with, applications to the IMB. When required, healthcare staff have attended the wing on the same day to remedy problems with medication, and have rearranged missed or forgotten appointments.

Healthcare staff have been working closely with the kitchen manager to address individuals' dietary needs. Diabetes and allergies are on the increase. A survey has recently been carried out with diabetic residents. The information gathered enabled healthcare staff to filter out residents who were requesting special diabetic foods but were not diabetic.

Waiting times continue to reduce, in line with our findings last year, with waiting times for GP appointments at 7 days (down five days), dentist at 7 days (down 18 days) and mental health assessment 5 to 7 days (down from 17 to 37 days)

The incidence of non-attendance at appointments has also improved, with a current level of less than 5%, due mainly to having more staff in post to manage this. The number of escorts per day increased from four to six, which has had a dramatic effect on reducing cancellations of external hospital appointments.

The Board welcomes and recognises the continued improvements to healthcare provision, and commends managers and staff for their hard work.

9. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The prison's key objectives during the year were improving the quality, availability and attendance in work, education and purposeful activities and progress has continued to be made. However, the target of 95% for residents to be in some form of purposeful activity has not been consistently achieved by this reporting year end.

By 30 September 2019, there were 627 resident places in industries (compared with 579 at the end of the previous year).

At the end of this reporting year, a job centre was set up at the prison, where residents looking for work can look at the available vacancies and make applications, as they would outside prison.

There have been significant changes in the education department, with three different heads of education, the latest being appointed in August 2019. However, despite these changes, improvements have been made. These include the introduction of four education sessions per day instead of two, resulting in two different subjects being taught in each of the morning and afternoon sessions. This used to be a three hour Maths or three hour English lesson, which was far too long for one subject, so each now reduced to 1.5 hours per lesson. Tutors have also been given a session per week for lesson planning. This was phase one of the education strategy, which also saw the creation of the education and activities hub, where all the education and activities are coordinated, enabling residents to develop and grow, to help reduce reoffending.

The prison has not had tutors for brickwork or carpentry throughout this reporting year – workshops are available, but attempts to recruit tutors during the year were not successful.

As stated by the then Minister of State for Justice in May 2019, the ability to recruit skilled instructional staff continues to challenge the delivery of purposeful activity in prisons.

A maintenance team of residents, to carry out basic maintenance tasks in the prison, is now in operation. This has freed up more time for the facilities team for the more complicated/serious maintenance issues, as well as utilising residents' skills.

Non-attendance is an ongoing concern. However, a new manager for regimes has been appointed, responsible for chasing up residents' non-attendance at work and education. This has resulted in an improvement in attendance, accelerated in the last three months and into the new year.

Library

Poor attendance issues were highlighted by the Board during this reporting year, and attendance has now much improved.

There were approximately 350 visits in April 2018, and this has increased to 600 (+41.7%) at the reporting year end. However, evening attendance could be better as, although the library stays open until 7pm Monday to Thursday, only one officer is available, when previously there were two.

Dovegate was awarded 27 Koestler (prison arts charity) awards, including one platinum, in 2019.

10. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

During the reporting year:

Number of residents discharged	646
Number of residents not found accommodation	173 (27%)
Number of residents found employment	42 (7%)

A number of those residents released without accommodation are well known by local support services (particularly in the Stoke area) and are often barred from all accommodation providers owing to a number of factors: substance misuse, substantive behavioural issues, poor attitude, or reoffending.

Due to the type of establishment HMP Dovegate is, in terms of this particular cohort of service users being subject to short sentences, recalls and breaches of post-sentence supervision periods, this situation is likely to continue in the longer term. Of further impact is that a number of accommodation properties (mainly in the Birmingham area) have had their licences revoked as they are no longer considered to be safe.

Those identified as NFA (no fixed abode) are subject to a duty to refer to the council housing and welfare officer.

Although the resettlement team has worked hard to see that all discharged residents meet the 'enhanced through the gate' specifications, the employment figures have dropped year on report year, by over 10% (minus 102 residents). Some of this is explained by longer-sentenced residents released into approved premises having licensing conditions barring employment, and other residents being better off on benefits than lower paid work. It would appear that this is a national problem, but the numbers are disappointing.

WORK OF THE BOARD

11. Work of the IMB and IMB statistics

As can be seen from the following Board statistics, we are still significantly below the recommended complement of Board members. This has continued to put undue pressure on a very small number of individuals, and their exceptional hard work and effort is much appreciated.

For the third year running, a recruitment and appointment process took eight months from start to finish and, although we made four appointments, one has not yet started (and it is unlikely that they will) and one has resigned after five months. Both were law graduates.

In the Board's opinion, the recruitment process is not fit for purpose, and the various stages of recruitment need to be reviewed and evaluated as a matter of urgency, to shorten the process significantly.

One member of the Dovegate IMB completed 15 years as a member, and retired at the end of December 2019. This leaves the Board with a net gain of one new member, subject to the two remaining new trainees completing their year's training.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period (including five probationers)	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period (including three probationers)	11*
Number of members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	0
Total number of Board meetings during the reporting period	12
Average number of attendees at Board meetings during the reporting period	6
Total number of visits to the prison	457
Percentage of segregation reviews attended	99%
Total number of applications received	371
<i>*One Board member has since retired and one trainee has resigned</i>	

12. APPLICATIONS TO THE IMB

Applications by subject		2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Code	Subject	12 months	12 months	12 months
1	Accommodation	17	6	7
2	Adjudications	6	8	2
3	Equality and diversity, including religion	5	12	3
4	Education/employment/training, including IEP	39	25	19
5	Family visits, including mail and telephone	16	14	22
6	Finance/pay	15	18	17
7	Food/kitchen related	6	6	7
8	Health related	44	56	48
9	Property within current establishment	42	70	59
10	Property during transfer/in another establishment	79	90	43
11	Canteen, facilities, catalogue shopping	15	8	4
12	Sentence related, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation etc.	15	13	12
13	Staff/prisoner Resident/detainee concerns, including bullying	27	24	25
14	Transfers	4	6	7
15	Miscellaneous	39	39	10
16	Blanks	2	0	8
	Total number of IMB applications	371	395	293
	Decrease on last year	6.3%		

Unlike the previous year, complaints to the prison are well down, as well as complaints to the Board (year on year, -6.3%; in the 6 months from April to September, -17.2%). The Board believes that this is further evidence that the improvements made during this reporting year have resulted in a settled, more satisfied prison community.

John Haley

Chair IMB Dovegate