



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP GUYS MARSH

for reporting Year
01 December 2018 – 30 November 2019

Published
April 2020



Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Sections

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

Evidence sections

4	Safety	7
5	Equality and fairness	9
6	Segregation/Care and separation unit	11
7	Accommodation (including communication)	12
8	Healthcare (including mental health and social care)	13
9	Education and other activities	14
10	Work, vocational training and employment	16
11	Resettlement preparation	17

	The work of the IMB	18
	Applications to the IMB	19

Sections 1 - 3

1 STATUTORY ROLE

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP Guys Marsh from 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019. Evidence has been derived from monitoring activities, attendance at meetings, scrutiny of data, surveys, discussion with prisoners and staff, and prisoner applications to the Board.

Guys Marsh was subject to an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) in January 2019, and an independent review of progress in October 2019. The focus of these exercises was to assess dynamically any progress that the prison was beginning to achieve, set against previous assessments. Any achievements to date and ongoing efforts continue to be undermined by the impact of psychoactive substances (PS) and by shortages of experienced staff (see paragraphs 4.4, 4.14 and 4.15).

The operational capacity rose from 396 to 446 as refurbished accommodation wings progressively came back into commission. These work activities are ongoing.

Main judgements

- There is a commitment to fairness and dignity, as evidenced by the themed posters and signage throughout the establishment, and by the Governor's and Deputy Governor's lead in developing a culture based on improvement, achievement and a respectful relationship between staff and prisoners.
- There remains a concern that the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme is viewed as being applied inequitably (see paragraph 5.12), and that equality and diversity work has been unfocused, resulting in little trust among prisoners from protected characteristic groups (see paragraphs 5.2 and 5.5). In addition, the revised pay scale, introduced during the reporting year, is not seen to be fair or reasonable (see paragraph 10.3).
- There has been evidence of effective efforts to improve or enhance standards of decency and humane treatment.
- The refurbishment and upgrading of accommodation wings offer much-improved, decent facilities.
- The Growth Project (as reported last year), which was a targeted programme promoting mutual respect and self-worth, came to an end in July 2019. Where effective strategies were identified, they were continued but were subsequently undermined by inconsistency in the management of the wings and by engagement of inexperienced or inadequate staff. This situation resulted in severe lapses in standards of cleanliness and hygiene, particularly around the serveries and wing environs, and in the time management of prisoners (see paragraphs 4.4, 7.1, 7.6, 8.6 and 9.2).
- In addition, the Board regrets the continued impact of the national lack of adequate provision for seriously mentally ill prisoners, who are likely to be placed on the care and separation unit (CSU) (see paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4).
- Attendance records for purposeful activity evidences poor performance (see paragraph 10.2), and show that targets have seldom been met, a contributory factor to this situation has been the standard of wing management, as mentioned above. The education programmes, likewise, have had poor take-up, with declining outcomes (see paragraph 9.1 and 9.3).
- Resettlement preparation at the point of release, however, is much improved, as the offender management unit (OMU) is now fully staffed, enabling effective teamwork and performance (see paragraphs 11.1 and 11.3). Targeted programmes for behaviour (see paragraph 11.6) are well-developed but a very small number of prisoners benefit.
- The use of PS continues to drive high levels of debt, coercion and serious health alarms, despite the concerted efforts of a variety of teams dedicated to supporting prisoners out of addiction and into staying safe (see paragraphs 4.13, 4.14, 4.17 and 4.18).
- We are sad to report one PS-related death in custody in this reporting year (see paragraph 4.6). However, the professionalism and timely interventions of wing officers and healthcare staff have prevented further fatalities.
- The Board remains concerned about the transfer of property from sending establishments. The issue has, again, generated the largest number of applications (30) to the Board. Occasionally, prisoners arrive at the establishment having lost their possessions in transfer between previous prison locations. This is very stressful for prisoners, and unacceptable. It is also particularly difficult and time consuming for reception/administration staff, while being a drain on the financial resources of HMPPS
- The Board commends progress within the areas of safety, intelligence, respect and the work of the OMU.

Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- In view of the commitment by the government to increase the number of prison places, will there be an equal commitment to resourcing competent prison officers, provide them with competent mentors and opportunities for their continued professional development.
- Will the Minister provide assurances that any ongoing provision of prison accommodation and associated facilities for prisoners are adequate and where appropriate suitably enhanced to discourage reoffending?
- Appropriate care of prisoners with poor mental health is a nationwide concern, as is the suitable care of the increasing numbers of older prisoners. Will the minister engage with relevant departments, within government, to facilitate improvements in the humane treatment of these categories of prisoners?
- It is requested of the Minister that the concerns underlined in paragraph 8.9 within the section headed HEALTHCARE be brought to the attention of NHS England.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Will Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) consider the regular review of the annual targets for delivery of offending behaviour programmes, which is currently considered to be unambitious?
- In addition, will HMPPS give urgent attention to the management of prisoners' property during transfer between establishments? It is still a persistent grievance, generating a disproportionately large number of complaints which continues to result in high costs in compensation claims, this is a concern raised repeatedly within the board's annual reports.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Attendance at a place of work or education is unacceptably low, and it is clear that disengaged prisoners are not being encouraged off the wings in a robust manner, by incentive or sanction. How is this going to be addressed?
- How is the work of the equality action team to be given priority and support, to underpin transparent fairness at the prison?
- How advanced are the plans to move the OMU into readily accessible accommodation within the prison grounds?

IMPROVEMENTS

- There is evidence of excellent practices across the work estate. The laundry, which has a few external contracts, offers a supportive work environment, with the bonus of prisoners being able to gain qualifications. The kitchens are similarly to be commended for those prisoners wishing to gain vocational qualifications. The gardens and land-based activities teams are hard working and successful, and between them have done much to enhance the environment, both within and immediately outside the prison.
- Significant and welcome investment in the upgrading of accommodation continues. The management of prisoners during the refurbishment in 2019 was handled well. It did cause some issues, however, as one wing, Jubilee, lost its status as a dedicated enhanced accommodation wing owing to cells being recategorized for dual occupancy; thankfully, there was less negative reaction than might have been anticipated.
- The overall downward trend in violence and self-harm was welcomed.
- The OMU's improved performance has been similarly sustained. The delivery of health services has been consistently good during this reporting year.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

3.1 HMP Guys Marsh is a category C adult male training and resettlement prison, located two miles south-west of Shaftesbury, in rural Dorset. The operational capacity has risen to 446 (from 396 as reported at year-end 2018), following the reoccupation of three refurbished wings. The extensive programme of upgrading of services to the five remaining wings is ongoing, as at the end of this reporting period. The ninth accommodation wing, Wessex, was destroyed by fire two years ago and, although now securely fenced, remains an unsightly physical and visual barrier at the centre of the site.

3.2 A new Governor was appointed in September 2019.

3.3 The site comprises an extensive range of workshops that are suitable for industries, and land-based activities including horticulture, maintenance of the grounds and egg production. There are two playing fields and a well-appointed gymnasium. Outside the perimeter is the Jailhouse Café, which is open to the public, and also a welcoming visitors' centre and the Regional Learning Centre. A farm shop has been built, but not yet stocked.

3.4 The CSU has 12 cells in the main block and two adjacent special cells, but there has been an average of four cells out of use throughout the reporting year because of damage to observation panels and sanitary ware.

3.5 The main contractors for the provision of services at the prison are:

- Education, learning and skills: Weston College
- Healthcare: Care UK
- Works and maintenance: Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL)
- Prisoner transport: GeoAmey

3.6 Numerous voluntary organisations provide a wide range of services for prisoners, coordinated by Clinks. These include Barnado's for visits and family days. Friends of Guys Marsh Prison raise funds for projects such as the provision of tools and clothing for prisoners on their release, and visitors' transport.

Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

4.1 The Board noted that the senior management team's strategies to improve safety began to make some impact during the reporting year. The meshing of safer communities and security teams within a single hub ensured better sharing of information and intelligence.

4.2 The weekly complex offenders meeting uses comprehensive information, enabling a multidisciplinary assessment of the mental, behavioural, emotional and physical needs of the most difficult prisoners. Constructive, coordinated individual interventions have contributed to the reduction in the worst behaviour.

4.3 The Board notes that the safer community team's analysis of figures indicated a downward trend of assaults, from 32 in January 2019, to five in May and six in June, although spikes in September (19) and November (14) occurred on certain wings. Following the analysis of when, during the period, violence occurred, the timing of the distribution of canteen orders was changed, and awareness of debt and debt counselling heightened.

4.4 Despite all of the work being done to reduce violence and improve safety, the strain on the regime due to staffing issues within the establishment had a detrimental effect on prisoner management in crucial areas such as key worker and movement escorts. Of the 114 registered staff typically only 85 were operational and this shortfall when accompanied by the large number of assaults (60) during this reporting period significantly contributed to this situation.

4.5 The number of incidents of self-harm in the overall prison population showed a downward quarterly trend from mid-year (34), but unfortunately this spiked in October (60). A few individuals accounted for multiple incidents and these were concentrated in two wings during the year. Cambria, holding the more vulnerable prisoners, had 72 and in Tarrant, (CSU) there were 47 incidents.

4.6 The death in custody, in May 2019, of a prisoner who had been a leading light in the fight against the use of PS was a tragedy that shocked everyone. Much effort was made to help all those who were close to the prisoner, and those involved in the incident, with Listeners available, along with a team of staff dedicated to providing support to prisoners and co-workers.

4.7 The Board continues to commend the establishment's efforts to improve the assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) procedures. A substantial training document was presented to all staff, in an effort to improve their understanding of the triggers for suicide or self-harm, the management of individuals on an ACCT and the competent completion of the person's file. Members of the Board will continue to monitor the embedding of good practice, always recognising that wing staff are under pressure when there are a number of ACCT files opened on any one wing (on one occasion during the reporting year, there were 10 being managed simultaneously on Cambria wing) and during times of limited staffing at night and at weekends.

4.8 There is a supportive regime for self-isolators on Cambria wing, where they can work in a dedicated workshop (No. 10) and associate in the chapel and the gym. However, when the Board raised some concern about those self-isolating on other wings, we were informed that the prison's emphasis is on reintegrating these persons back into the main regime, rather than encouraging them to self-isolate. There is potential for self-isolators to work and associate in the 'serenity garden', which is attached to the chapel but, unfortunately, this is an asset which has been neglected over this reporting year.

4.9 As reported last year, the induction programme has been unsettled and inconsistent. However, the Board is pleased to report that the newly refurbished Anglia wing is now the designated induction wing, with comprehensive first night arrangements and appropriate support offered. Listeners and Samaritan telephones are available there. A week-long induction programme had been introduced by the end of the reporting year, and we will continue to scrutinise it for consistency and stability.

4.10 Much effort has been made to deal with the governance in the use of force. As reported last year, the establishment admitted that levels of use of force were too high and poorly recorded. There was an improvement in this area but there was still no consistency in recording details of these events. A new lead employing improved forensic interrogation and analysis have led to a downward trend. It is still higher than ideal, but the frequency when compared with the figures recorded in the previous reporting period demonstrated improvement at all three points, i.e. January 48 down to 19, mid-year 40 down to 20, end of year 36 down to 21. Five of the incidents of use of force were to prevent self-harm.

4.11 The Board noted that the voluntary use of body-worn cameras was not sufficiently promoted. There was a lack of confidence on the part of officers to wear these, and concern about the use to which the recorded material might be put. In addition, with respect to fixed surveillance, the placing of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras has proven to be problematic as some have been placed too low and are therefore vulnerable to vandalism.

4.12 HMP Guys Marsh, along with other prisons, recognises that it has a severe drug problem. Prisoners use illicit, unprescribed substances in many forms. Efforts are made to deal with the situation on three fronts, by restricting supply, reducing demand and building recovery.

4.13 Prisoners state that drugs are easy to acquire. Many methods to introduce illicit drugs into the establishment have been employed. This includes the well-publicised find of dead rats stuffed with 'merchandise' that were thrown over the perimeter fence. Daily reports show that prisoners are found to be under the influence of an illicit substance on a regular basis. This has led to debt, intimidation by suppliers, and self-isolation by those who fear retribution for non-payment. Staff shortages and inexperienced officers working to tackle organised gangs inside and outside the prison walls make the problem hard to overcome.

4.14 During this reporting period, all prisoners' mail was scrutinised and photocopied, in order to eradicate the supply of drug-infused paper. This has reportedly had some success in reducing the amount of illicit substances available and has support from the general prison population. However, in some cases this process has delayed the delivery of legitimate mail to prisoners, reportedly up to five weeks. Increased staffing in the post room has helped to shorten these delays.

4.15 At the time of writing this report, there has been an increase in the brewing, and drinking, of hooch (alcohol brewed from a wide mix of substances), which is an indication of the decreased availability of illicit drugs.

4.16 The Board commends the efforts made to reduce demand for unprescribed drugs, using numerous strategies, including prisoner forums, newsletters, 'tackling drugs through sports', additional staff training, and providing visible information on the effects of drug-taking on the body. However, until the establishment has a more robust focus on alleviating boredom, a major underlying cause of drug abuse, with meaningful and purposeful activity in the workshops, in education classes or on the wings, this concern will continue to be unresolved. The integrated substance misuse strategy team engages with prisoners willing to address their addiction, but some persistent users continue to resist help.

4.17 Prisoners who have had success in the drug recovery process remark on how hard it is to remain drug free. Prisoners have told members of the Board many times that they had not taken drugs on a regular basis until entering the prison system.

4.18 A play, 'Choices', put on by prisoners through the Growth Project, depicted the pressures of bullying and intimidation permeating life on the wings.

4.19 Towards the end of the reporting year, an incident occurred, arising from the accumulation of thirty-nine bags of property in a long-serving prisoner's cell. Some of the content was potentially harmful or hazardous, resulting in a reportable incident, involving several regional agencies, which was dealt with over three days. The Board was impressed by the debrief on this incident, which provided many learning points for HMPPS. However, it particularly raised issues about volume and content control of in-cell property at the establishment.

5.1 The Board has noted that the establishment, in accordance with its own detailed policy and a personal directive from the newly appointed governor, is committed to providing a safe, decent and fair environment, and to the elimination of any unlawful discrimination against individuals from the protected characteristics groups identified by the 2010 Equality Act.

5.2 The Board reports that insufficient and inconsistent priority has been given to the equality action team's efforts, with few meetings, and some being rearranged at short notice, which precluded members of the Board from attending. These meetings were poorly attended by senior managers and there was little evidence of appropriate follow-up actions. There has been no evident improvement in this area since the previous report, and at the time of writing there has been no analysis of equality needs. The newly appointed lead in equality and diversity should provide impetus to an area of such importance by undertaking such an analysis.

5.3 Towards the end of the reporting year, a new initiative, a 'purpose, achievement, community and transformation plan' was introduced. Along with the wider reach of the replacement for the Growth Project, Active Citizenship, plus improvement in general prisoner engagement, there exists the foundation for addressing the severe shortfalls in priority identified above (paragraph 5.2).

5.4 Throughout the reporting year, members of the Board were made aware, in applications received and in general conversations with prisoners, that, as reported last year, prisoners did not trust the complaints process. The complaints clerk has overhauled the administration of the systems within the business hub but inconsistencies have continued to occur on the wings owing to poor or inadequate logging and by delayed or inadequate responses from those locations and other establishments.

5.5 As reported last year, the Board remains concerned about the lack of trust in the discrimination incident report form (DIRF) process. Members have had conversations with prisoners who say that DIRFs are 'useless', and the perception is that they are put straight in the bin. During the reporting year, however, 51 forms were submitted, of which 25 were dismissed, five were withdrawn, 13 were proven, three were upheld and five are ongoing investigations. Towards the end of this reporting year, a new lead officer was appointed, and DIRF investigator training has been implemented.

5.6 The chaplaincy team, supporting many faiths within the prison, is very proactive and provides individual pastoral support, as well as a peaceful and safe space for prisoners. The team also has a good relationship with all departments. A member of the chaplaincy team visits the CSU and talks to prisoners there daily, and sees 100% of prisoners on arrival at the establishment and 99% on release. The Board commends their work.

5.7 The Board regrets to report that the multifaith room is still shabby, in need of refurbishment and being used for ad hoc meetings, with no regard for the fact that it is a sacred (shoeless) space for prisoners of Muslim and other faiths.

5.8 The serenity garden, opened with much fanfare last year, has been neglected, with no plan to make sensible use of the space.

5.9 Of the 440 prisoners held at the establishment, 26 were aged over 55, with three being over 70 years of age. They continued to be supported by staff and generally felt safe but reported some low-level verbal discrimination from other prisoners. Deteriorating health in the senior sector concerns everyone and their welfare was monitored continuously, one of these being under the care of social services. A personal emergency evacuation plan register was kept updated for the 10-12 prisoners who were regularly assessed.

5.10 There was an increase in the proportion of prisoners self-declaring as having a disability – up from 33% last year to 50% within this reporting period. This ranged from attention-deficit hyperactive disorder to physical or mental impairment, due to injury or drug abuse or some other long-term medical conditions. Mental illness, however induced, was still the background to much disability reporting. There was some discrepancy in the numbers derived from the NOMIS data on prisoners, with registered disability, at 8%. There will be an ongoing investigation to determine the accuracy of these figures, with the current understanding being that the differential lies in self-declaration.

5.11 There continues to be inadequate facilities throughout the establishment for wheelchair access. The Board considers that HMP Guys Marsh remains an unsuitable location for older prisoners and those with physical disabilities due to its continued failure to comply with current legislation.

5.12 The Board remains concerned about the effectiveness and management of the IEP scheme. Good behaviour appears not to be sufficiently recognised, with comments from prisoners such as: “to get anything done, you have to break the rules”, and “good behaviour gets you no favours”. There is not enough challenge to encourage attendance at work or education, and refusal does not always result in loss of privilege.

5.13 The Board is pleased to report that the visiting areas of the prison are clean and welcoming. The visits we observed started punctually, with incoming visitors dealt with respectfully when complying with the regulations. The Barnardo’s team is on hand to assist with children and arrange extra activities in the very welcoming children’s corner. As well as the regular visits, the prison holds family days (eight a year), giving a valuable opportunity for families to enjoy quality time in a relaxed atmosphere, and special food is prepared for all visitors. During these days, prison staff are out of uniform and engage well with prisoners and their families. The deputy governor has introduced a scheme whereby a personal letter is sent to families of every newly arrived prisoner, inviting direct contact should they wish it.

5.14 The Board is mindful of its own lack of diversity and has tried to improve this when new vacancies arise. The recruitment area has been extended beyond the rural location, and recruitment literature has been distributed in a wider variety of outlets and to local religious leadership.

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 The overnight occupancy of the CSU averaged five to six prisoners over the reporting year, fluctuating as the need arose; the spikes following the pattern of violence within the establishment demonstrated that the unit was used for its intended purpose of swift management of unacceptable behaviour.

6.2 The staff were conscientious in managing the very few prisoners who were held within this unit in excess of 41 days, and dealt with the ‘dirty protests’ efficiently as and when they occurred.

6.3 The holding of prisoners with mental health concerns on the unit, awaiting secure hospital placement (four during the reporting year), considerably exacerbated the work of the unit, as it occupied cells and created periods of abnormal disturbance which adversely influenced the behaviour of other prisoners there, as well as creating additional demands on the staff. The Board was aware that the delays were a result of severe national shortages of suitable placements. Efforts were made to stabilise and reintegrate prisoners with lower-level mental health issues to normal location whenever this was possible.

6.4 Members of the Board observed the consistently humane and skilful support and management of the more challenging prisoners on the unit, including those on ACCTs and/or with mental health and drug issues. We consider this unit to be a place of safety, and in some circumstances the best place for them to be.

6.5 The CSU staff were meticulous in their management of documentation and computerised systems, all of them having received enhanced training for enabling them to work competently within this environment.

6.6 Members of the Board attended this unit more than twice a week and had unimpeded access to the occupants, who we interviewed during those visits.

6.7 When members of the Board monitored adjudications they were seen to be conducted fairly, professionally, efficiently and in accordance with the prison’s rules and regulations. However, too many were being deferred or dismissed through the unavailability of timely evidence. During these adjudication activities, the Board observed that, where body-worn cameras had been appropriately employed, the evidence they provided achieved improved clarity and thereby assisted in arriving at fair judgements; however, there were still reservations about the wearing of these cameras (see paragraph 4.12).

6.8 When advised in advance of their timing, Board members attended 14-day segregation reviews, conducted by governors; however, a considerable number of these were not notified to the Board, and therefore were not attended.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including Communication)

7.1 A continuing concern was the standard of cleanliness and hygiene of the food trolleys and serveries, which showed no improvement since the last report. Neither servery workers nor supervising officers behind the servery consistently dressed appropriately in 'whites'. The Board regularly brought this to the attention of the governor, through the weekly report process and at monthly Board meetings. Members have met with indifference when approaches have been made to officers on the wings.

7.2 Following the most recent food survey, in July 2019, the kitchen manager tried to establish a regular discussion with wing representatives. Initially, the meetings were held within the confines of the kitchen, but attendance was low, so it was hoped to engage with the wings during wing forum meetings. This has proved difficult as it relies on communication from the wings as to the timing of the meeting, which is generally at short notice. The Board applauds the efforts by the kitchen manager and his staff in their attempts at engagement throughout this reporting period.

7.3 The current food budget is £2.10 per prisoner per day. The Board receives few complaints about the quality of the food provided. Prisoners had the opportunity to comment weekly on the back of their menu sheets, and all comments received a response. The kitchen catered well, and within budget, for the requirements of faith, allergies and medical conditions.

7.4 The laundry was closed for a total of six weeks within this reporting period whilst a steam boiler awaited repair, during this time the instructors travelled to HMP Channings Wood in order to undertake the laundering needs of the prisoners and laundry contracts with external organisations were temporarily suspended.

7.5 Reception clothing kits were and continue to be provided for newly arrived prisoners. Initially there were problems some of which were brought about by them not being informed about the one-for-one exchange system operated within this establishment.

7.6 Localised areas of litter around the establishment have been brought regularly to the attention of the governor. The litter around two accommodation wings (Gwent and Mercia) was and remains of particular concern as it attracts vermin.

7.7 The refurbishment of Dorset wing was completed in July 2019. Anglia was reopened in August, and the induction process was moved back onto that wing. Residents commented on the improvements in the showers. Both the wings have been fitted with a new heating system, which provides a more controllable temperature range, although its efficacy relies upon the cooperation of the residents within these locations.

7.8 The Board has expressed concern over the low siting of fixed CCTV cameras within the accommodation wings, as they are within reach and therefore vulnerable to vandalism. The lens of one such camera has been badly scratched on Mercia wing, and can no longer provide a clear image (see also paragraph 4.12).

7.9 The Board regrets to note that, as also recorded in last year's report, the inconsistent leadership shown on some wings which has resulted in a lack of basic general cleaning by some orderlies, which was and continues to be accepted rather than challenged by officers and/or wing managers.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 The Board is pleased to report that the health centre works well, and healthcare staff are proud of their relationship with prisoners and prison staff. Comments made by prisoners to the Board include: 'I had excellent care when I had my psychosis'; 'I didn't have to wait long for my eye test'; 'It was better than outside'; and 'The nurses treat me with respect'. In addition to these plaudits, the dental service was also beginning to receive praise from its patients.

8.2 Nurse staffing levels have been sufficiently maintained, and retention is good in this area. However, there has been difficulty in finding consistent contracted GP cover. This has meant that a doctor's surgery was held only two days a week, rather than the preferred contracted three days, planned when the budget was drawn up.

8.3 The taking of illicit substances within the prison continues to place great demands on the medical staff. Prisoners are found to be under the influence of an illicit substance on a daily basis. When healthcare staff are advised that a prisoner has taken such a drug, they arrange a visit within 48 hours. Wing staff may request additional support, but many prisoners will not engage in this. The mental health team is well staffed, and is initiating several interventions, including talking therapies, for prisoners with addictions and mental health issues.

8.4 Healthcare staff find treating the effects of such substances as 'spice' and other PS difficult. The composition of these drugs is constantly changing, which makes it difficult for healthcare staff to provide a personal support programme for individuals. At times during the reporting period, some of these substances were found to contain rat poison, acetone and, more recently, petrol. The total number of prisoners needing medical assistance for substance misuse from December 2018 to October 2019 was 275.

8.5 During a discussion at a prison forum, attendees suggested that many prisoners took illicit substances to alleviate boredom. The Board will continue to monitor any focused effort to address this perception and the actions implemented, to ensure that prisoners have the opportunities to engage in rewarding and worthwhile activities (see paragraphs 10.2, 10.3).

8.6 Healthcare staff issue appointment slips the day before a prisoner needs to attend the unit. These are taken to the respective wings for delivery to prisoners' cells by the night staff. Prisoners complain that this is not carried out efficiently, and the appointment slips often arrive too late for them to attend the medical centre. In many cases, slips arrive after prisoners have left their wings for work or education classes, which means that they miss the appointment. This problem was highlighted in the Board's last report and still needs addressing, as it continues to result in a waste of expensive resource and cause delays in treatment.

8.7 Since the last report, prisoners have said that they now feel safer collecting their medication, as prison officers have a greater presence in the medical centre.

8.8 Over the reporting year, the incidence of self-harming spiked (see paragraph 4.5). Prisoners claimed that a major factor for this was drug debt and its consequences.

8.9 Approximately 10% of the population of the prison is in the 50+ age group. Informal chats with members of this community reveal that they feel well cared for by healthcare staff. There are three prisoners diagnosed with dementia, and the establishment has initiated a 'buddy' strategy at local level in order to manage this situation. At the time of this report, there was no community pathway addressing the peculiar needs of these individuals. This situation would benefit from an immediate review by NHS England.

8.10 During the reporting period, healthcare complaints were amicably resolved through consultation between staff and local management during dialogue with the prisoners concerned with only one case having to be escalated to Care UK for resolution.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 There were two HMIP inspections of education, skills and work within this reporting period. The inspection team noted a decline in the already unsatisfactory performance from December 2018 to October 2019. It is the view of the Board that the primary cause was the significant changes to management staff within both the prison and Weston College, with long intervals between replacements being appointed. Weston College performance was particularly affected. The inspectors also noted that the prison had made strong appointments of new managers, who have been 'quick to begin a process of wholesale improvement' (HMIP report, 2019). Weston College made their appointments to senior managerial posts during November 2019.

9.2 Attendance is still unsatisfactory. The figures are as follows:

Planned attendance: 12,078 places

Actual attendance: 8,258 (68%)

Authorised absence: 2,810 (24%)

Unauthorised absence: 997 (8%)

Please note: The average number on the roll throughout this period was 400 prisoners.

The prison manager commented that: "There has been a lack of motivation from wing staff to get men off the wing". [and this] has been a significant factor in the poor attendance, especially when coupled with closures and security issues.

9.3 Weston College success data (April – September 2019):

Course level	Success rate (%)	Number of learners
Entry	67	134
Level 1	72	93
Level 2	76	19
Level 3	95	34

9.4 The Weston College courses offered (educational and vocational) have included: English, mathematics, horticulture, catering, barbering, creative crafts, bricklaying, painting and decorating, construction, information and communications technology (ICT), cleaning and distance learning. These courses are run at different levels, and all lead to qualifications. However, there have been long vacancies in the posts for teaching staff in English, ICT, English for speakers of other languages and for an outreach teacher. It is worth recording part of a statement made by Weston College following the HMIP inspection in October 2019: 'There have been inconsistencies in management and some tough decisions have been made to let the less than effective managers go. This has meant that the team were not led and supported as effectively as they might have been'.

9.5 Distance learning was another disappointing area, with much lower participation than in previous years: There was one in mathematics; two in sports fitness; one in criminology; one in mental health; four in business; one in science; and one in accounting.

9.6 During this reporting period, the physical education department evolved into a much stronger and more stable condition owing to staffing increases (from four to six full-time specialists). These staff were not called on to cover for absent wing staff at anywhere near the level of previous years. The physical education facilities are first rate, and the staff and prison managers are to be congratulated in creating a rugby pitch on waste ground that will enhance the opportunities for fitness training. The staff have created links to Bournemouth Football Club and to Bath Rugby Club, both being prepared to support the establishment's activities. There continues to be a longstanding problem with the all-weather soccer pitch, which is unusable when damp, rendering it unsafe.

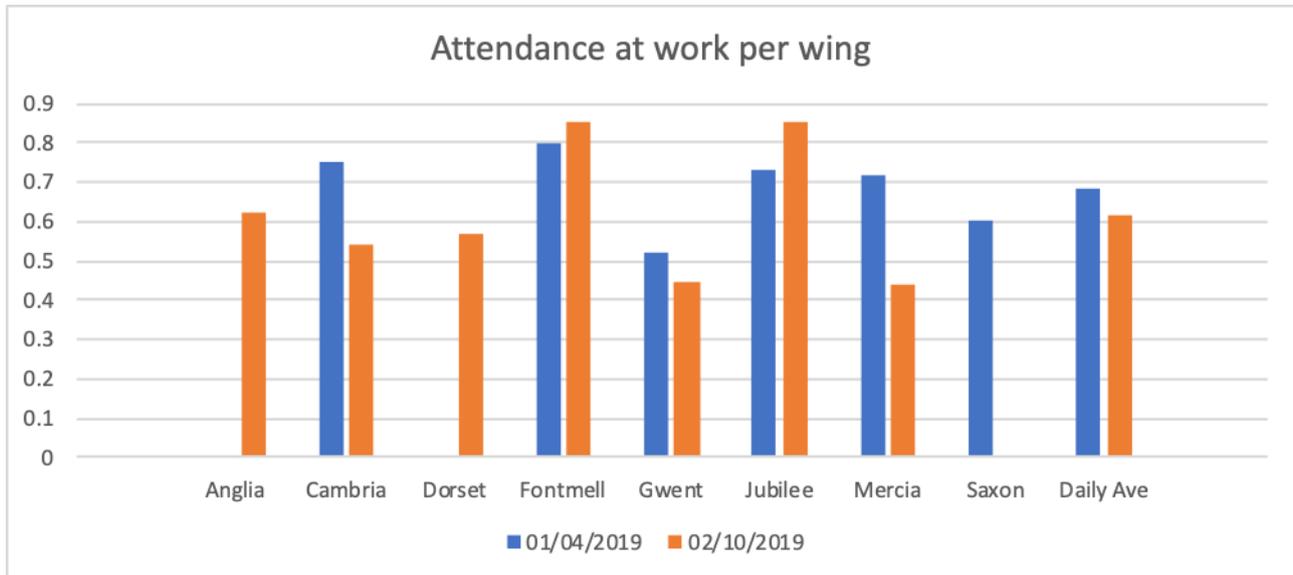
9.7 The library was and remains well stocked and run efficiently. It is now open on Tuesday evenings and there is a session on Saturday mornings for full-time working prisoners, in order to facilitate equitable access. There has been an initiative to have a session for self-isolating prisoners, but the attendance has been poor.

9.8 In summary; It was a disappointing twelve months, yet, with competent managers in place and other vacancies filled (as of November 2019), the coming year could show measurable improvements if the careful and exhaustive analyses previously undertaken are used as a foundation for progress.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 HMP Guys Marsh is a training and resettlement establishment within the south-west region. An interested and engaged work force could lead to a settled community, as well as providing vital key skills for future employment on release.

10.2 Attendance at work has been disappointing over the reporting year. There has been a notional target of 80% attendance. This target has rarely been met, with some wings reporting attendance as low as 45%.



10.3 A key element in such a lack of enthusiasm for work has been the introduction of new rates of pay, which prisoners have perceived to be too low, and have had an adverse impact on attendance and recruitment into industries. A weekly wage of £8 for working seven half-day shifts has failed to encourage full attendance. The Board understands that the management team is aware of the negative impact that the pay review has had, and there are plans to address this, which would be welcome.

10.4 There have been some positive developments throughout the reporting year. The farms team has developed a poultry section, which has been successful financially and also attracted much interest from those working in the area. The workshops restoring furniture and creating artefacts from waste wood have given residents important new skills and they are to be commended. Similarly, the electrical work in refurbishing HMP televisions and recycling kettles has been a success. However, in all cases the workflow has been uneven, often leading to workshops sending prisoners back onto the wing.

10.5 The Friends of Guys Marsh initiative, setting up a retail unit outside the prison to sell both farm produce and artefacts made in the prison, is a very positive development, although this has yet to be seen in operation. There continues to be some excellent practice across the work estate; the laundry, which has some external contracts, offers a supportive work environment, with the bonus of offering work-based qualifications. The kitchens are similarly to be commended for their support of those prisoners wishing to gain vocational qualifications. The gardens team is hard working and successful, and has done much to enrich the environment, both within and immediately outside the prison.

10.6 The Board welcomes the appointment of a new industries manager in December 2019, to give this sector a timely boost of energy and ideas. Urgent action is required to deal with pay rates, workflow, new enterprises within the prison and the development of existing functions, such as the recycling area.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 The OMU is now fully staffed, with all staff being non-operational and able to attend to OMU tasks full time. This enables more effective teamwork and performance. The number of prisoners without completed offender assessment system (OASys) assessments and sentence plans has been reduced to a manageable level, despite a high proportion of prisoners arriving from other prisons without these.

11.2 The OMU is located within the administration block, away from the main estate, making engagement with the prisoners difficult. At present, interviews are conducted in legal visits (in the visits hall), the chapel or a room in the programmes department, on an ad hoc basis. The Board believes that cooperation between the programmes department, Catch22 and wing staff would be enhanced by being located on the main estate, and that prisoners would thereby benefit.

11.3 During the reporting year, community rehabilitation company and Catch22 staff relocated into the newly refurbished Dorset wing, enabling easy access by prisoners during the 12 weeks before their release. Figures from Catch 22 covering January to October 2019 showed that, out of 218 prisoners released into the community, 89% had accommodation, 21% had jobs and all of them had been referred to Department of Work and Pensions staff, who attended the prison once a week to assist them with benefits claims and the opening of bank accounts. The Board has observed the benefits of Catch 22 staff being visible and accessible to prisoners since their relocation, and prisoners received, and continue to receive, an excellent service from this resource.

11.4 The programmes team continues to deliver offending behaviour programmes, such as the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP; four courses a year, each starting with 10 prisoners); Resolve (for reducing violent behaviour; two courses a year, each starting with 10 prisoners); and Timewise (a programme delivered on a one-to-one basis; no figures available). They also deliver Choices and Changes (a maturity pack) and challenge, support and intervention plans, as required (four to date).

11.5 Although the targets for delivering the accredited programmes (TSP and Resolve) are being achieved, the number of completions following drop-out represent only a small proportion of prisoners serving their sentences at the establishment. The Board feels that more prisoners should be benefitting from these activities or other suitable programmes. The comprehensive needs analysis, using sentence plans, which was mooted last year, did not materialise.

The work of the IMB

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13
Total number of visits to the establishment	443
Total number of segregation reviews attended	63

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	8	4
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	10	3
C	Equality	4	6
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	8	8
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	8	7
E 2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	5
F	Food and kitchens	3	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	17	14
H 1	Property within this establishment	14	7
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	30	55
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	5	7
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	12	34
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	16	15
K	Transfers	6	7
L	Miscellaneous	21	16
	TOTALS	170	189