



Annual Report

of the

Independent Monitoring Board

at

HMP Highpoint

for reporting Year

2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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A. SECTIONS 1-3

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board is specifically charged to:

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

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

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 This report covers the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. Evidence comes from observations made on rota visits, attendance at meetings, scrutiny of data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications.

2.2 With a population of over 1,300, HMP Highpoint is one of the largest category C training and resettlement prisons in the country, supporting prisoners who are at various stages in their sentences. Staffing levels are falling; however, they are still higher than in previous years. Recruitment campaigns for uniformed staff prove problematic, with campaigns being run nationally, instead of at a local level. The offender management in custody model, although still in operation, has been somewhat curtailed, owing to staff being redeployed to other duties. However, the work of the Amends programme (see paragraph 11.2.1) has seen prisoners interacting positively with staff, and taking on the challenges and opportunities that this programme gives them. This encourages a more settled and productive environment.

2.3 The availability and use of drugs, including new psychoactive substances (NPS) and cannabis in all its forms, have again proved to be problematic, with drugs entering the prison by various means. This causes disruption to the regime, with staff having to deal with prisoners who are 'under the influence' (see paragraphs 4.4.4. and 4.5.1).

2.4 The establishment was subject to an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) in August 2019. Overall, the findings were positive, particularly with regard

to the area of respect, which scored 4; safety and purposeful activity both scored 3, with rehabilitation and release planning scoring 2.

2.5 Again, there are concerns, in particular in regard to the backlog of maintenance work which has not been carried out, which has an impact on the day-to-day regime (see paragraph 7.2.2).

Main judgements

2.6 Despite the challenges faced by the prison:

- Overall, prisoners receive fair treatment at Highpoint, but some inconsistencies mean that there can be varying experiences and opportunities, particularly with job opportunities. For example, the vocational workshop and welding workshop on the South site have no qualified instructors, so remain closed (see paragraphs 10.1.4 and 10.1.5). The visits hall on the North site still lacks a play area (see paragraph 5.3.2).
- The Board have noted that there has been a marked rise in incidents of violence, self-harm, assaults and other incidents. However the safer prisons team make sure the prisoners involved are supported, and those who are involved in behaviour that is deemed unacceptable are dealt with and challenged (see paragraph 4.4.1 and 4.5.2).
- Through its leadership, the prison has a strong commitment towards humane treatment of the prisoners in its care and the decency agenda. This is reflected by the prisoners taking responsibility for the overall environment, as well as their own (see paragraph 7.1.1), although this has been undermined at times by delays in maintenance and repairs (see paragraph 7.1.2). The Board is pleased to note that steps have been taken to improve the standard of cleanliness on some units, including Tempest unit, which has shown a vast improvement from last year (see paragraph 7.1.1).
- Preparation for release has improved. Prisoners have the opportunity to enrol on courses which will prepare them for the job market on their release. Employability fayres (see paragraph 10.2.1) and the Amends programme support prisoners in moving forward. Local and national firms have engaged with the prison in providing job opportunities (see paragraph 10.2.1).

Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

2.7.1 Works maintenance contract

Again, the Board has seen little or no improvement in the service provided by Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL) during the reporting period. Repairs outstanding at the end of the reporting year were high, and are not acceptable. This has a detrimental impact on living and working conditions within the establishment. The Board asks the minister to carry out an urgent review of the maintenance contract, to ensure that it meets the needs of a challenging prison environment.

2.7.2 Property

Again, the Board has concerns about the way the Prison Service handles, and, in particular, transports, prisoners' property. Having looked at how many applications the Board receives that relate to lost and delayed property, there has been no improvement since last year (see paragraphs 7.5.3 and 7.5.4). We ask the minister to ensure that an urgent review is undertaken, to bring an end to the current most unsatisfactory position (see paragraph 7.5.5).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

2.7.3 Equality and diversity

There should be a national standard regarding the provision of hours for diversity and inclusion teams, with appropriate financial resources (see paragraph 5.1.1). The Board asks for mandatory training in equality and diversity, with regular ongoing training, for prison and civilian staff. We live in a diverse cultural milieu, and educating staff and prisoners on a continuous basis is essential (see paragraphs 5.1.2 and 5.1.10).

2.7.4 Dentistry

The Board asks that the contract for providing dental care for prisoners at the establishment is reviewed. Waiting times for an initial appointment have increased, with the percentage of prisoners not being seen within six weeks rising from 31.25% in December 2018 to 46% in this reporting year (see paragraph 8. 10).

2.7.5 Drugs: disruption of supply

Again, the Board asks the Prison Service to consider an urgent coordinated and dynamic strategy to disrupt the drug supply into establishments. The scourge of drugs entering the prison in all its forms has an impact on the day-to-day regime, and extra resources and staff are needed to tackle this difficult issue (see paragraphs 4.4.4 and 4.5.1).

TO THE GOVERNOR

2.7.7 The Board asks for the consideration of more hours being given, or at least a consistent pattern of hours, within the equalities office for the equalities officer to deliver their responsibilities. Due to Highpoint's size and split-site nature, the North site is currently disadvantaged in this regard (see paragraph 5.1.8.)

2.7.8 The Board asks for consideration to be given to providing a dedicated play area in the North site visits hall. This has been long overdue, and is a disadvantage to prisoners on that site (see paragraph 5.3.2).

2.7.9 The Board asks the governor to look proactively to appoint instructors in the welding workshop and vocational workshop on the South site, giving prisoners the opportunity to gain useful qualifications upon their release (see paragraph 10.1.5).

2.7.10 The Board is disappointed at the lack of hours assigned to key workers, and asks the governor to look at giving more time to this initiative (see paragraphs 4.3.2 and 7.6.1).

Improvements

2.8.1 The Amends programme goes from strength to strength, having a positive impact on prisoners preparing for release, and this is to be commended (see paragraph 11.2.1).

2.8.2. The Board welcomes the positive and beneficial opening of Unit 16, doing work with prisoners who find it difficult to fit in to the normal regime. It is to be hoped that this will become a regular initiative. (see paragraph 3.4).

2.8.3 The 'decency agenda' at the establishment is acknowledged, with prisoners being fully committed to delivering this under the guidance of the senior management team and officers (see paragraph 7.1.1).

2.8.4. The Board has found an improvement in how the prison handles those who are self-isolating in their cells, giving them full support and providing opportunities for them to move on to the normal regime. (see paragraph 3.4)

2.8.5. The Board acknowledges that the senior management team has worked hard to promote the decency agenda, including daily visits to the units and engaging with the prisoners and staff (see paragraph 7.1.1).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRISON

3.1 HMP Highpoint was originally opened as a prison in 1977 and has undergone a number of estate reconfigurations over the years. The prison is sited on a former Royal Air Force base, using many of the original buildings, and is split over two adjacent (North and South) sites. It is situated some 10 miles south east of Newmarket in rural Suffolk.

3.2 Highpoint is a male category C training and resettlement prison for London and Essex. The operational capacity for the reporting period was 1,325.

3.3 Accommodation at the prison varies considerably, in terms of fabric and facilities. On the South site there are 10 residential units, and on the North site there are five. Most units have in-cell sanitation, except for Vickers and Halifax on the South site, and Lysander, Hawker and Dominie on the North site, which have 24-hour access to lavatory and shower recesses. Three units with en-suite cells are available on the South site. Most cells are single occupancy; however, there are some doubled up single cells on both the North and South sites. In-cell television is available to all prisoners, with the exception of those on the basic regime.

3.4 Unit 16 on the North site was opened for a 12-week period; its objectives are to support the development of confidence, opportunity and purpose of prisoners who may have difficulties in prison. The aspiration is for the prisoners to engage with the prison regime and access opportunities to begin the process of change. The unit was only intended to be in operation for 12 weeks, and after that period an assessment would be undertaken.

3.5 The dynamics of the establishment, with its split site, large population (with some 80% coming from London or Essex), comprising prisoners being held some distance from home and in a remote and rural location, continues to create significant performance challenges for the prison and makes Highpoint a complex establishment.

3.6 Agencies and contractors for the prison include:

- London and Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) provide resettlement services
- Phoenix Futures provides drug rehabilitation services
- Ormiston Trust provides services for families and children
- Care UK Ltd provides healthcare services
- Escort contractors include Serco and G4S
- Novus provides learning and skills – education and training
- GFSL provides maintenance

- Jobcentre Plus
- St Mungo's Housing
- Shaw Trust
- The information, advice and guidance service is provided by the Forward Trust
- Ipswich Housing Action Group provides debt advocacy
- Breakeven provides gambling support

B: EVIDENCE SECTIONS 4-11

4. SAFETY

4.1 Reception

4.1.1 In reception, late arrivals can pose a problem as there is limited time to complete paperwork before lockdown. Healthcare staff are not always available to do the initial health assessment, which means that these prisoners have to go to induction without the proper checks being made. However, staff are mindful of the priority to give attention to the health and safety of an individual. Prison orderlies play a particularly valuable role in providing information and support to new arrivals in reception.

4.1.2 The induction unit is situated on Handley. Prisoners have access to a full induction programme, which is run by peer support workers and includes advice and information to help new arrivals settle in. A booklet has been produced by the prisoners, giving useful information about all aspects of prison life in Highpoint. This has been very well received by new admissions, as they can refer to it in their first weeks at the establishment and thereafter. The chaplaincy sees all new arrivals, to signpost pastoral care available from their team. Support is also available from a range of peer groups, including Listeners and orderlies.

4.2 Safer custody

4.2.1 The Listener scheme is actively promoted, with posters displayed on all units, and prisoners can ask to see a Listener on a one-to-one basis. If for any reason this request cannot be facilitated, then the Samaritans telephone is offered.

4.2.2 The number of self-harm incidents increased from 302 in 2018 to 513 in 2019. There was also an increase in the number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT)

documents opened, from 462 in 2018 to 523 in 2019, an increase of 13%. Board members ask to see prisoners on open ACCTs when visiting the residential units, and note that observations have improved since suicide and self-harm training has been offered to all staff on a rolling programme. ACCT assessors regularly check ACCT documents for the accuracy and quality of entries.

4.2.3 Challenge, support and intervention plans are opened on prisoners who are believed to have, or have, exhibited violent or antisocial behaviour. Victim support plans are opened on prisoners who have been victims of violence. Both plans offer support to the prisoner, through monitoring them more closely on the wings and in workplaces, with the aim of reducing their negative behaviour or their chances of being bullied. The plans also highlight to staff (wing staff, in particular) the need for closer observation and daily recording on the Prison National Offender Management Information System (P-NOMIS).

4.2.4 One prisoner died of an apparently self-inflicted death in December 2019. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman carried out an investigation, and there will be an inquest in due course.

4.2.5 At the end of the reporting year, an inquest, on a prisoner who died in 2015, was concluded.

4.3 Violence reduction

4.3.1 Statistics show that, overall, the number of violent incidents in 2019 increased by 10% from the previous year (see paragraph 4.5.2). There was a worrying rise in the number of reported assaults, with both resident-on-resident and resident-on-staff incidents increasing in number. Weapon finds have increased by 7% from last year (see paragraph 4.4.2), with 232 finds recorded. Violent incidents are analysed, and those involved are interviewed by safer prisons staff.

4.3.2 Since the introduction of offender management in custody (OMiC) in June 2018 and the subsequent increase in uniformed staff, the Board has noted that prisoners are more engaged with staff and have confidence that, in general, their concerns regarding safety are taken seriously and acted upon. However, towards the end of the reporting year, officers have been unable to fulfil the number of hours needed to give the required individual time to prisoners.

4.3.3 Bullied victims are supported by staff, and known perpetrators are challenged.

4.3.4 The Board still has some concerns that a small number of prisoners who are refused Rule 45 are self-segregating on the wings because of fear of bullying, or debt- and drug-related issues. However, the prison has taken steps to support and review these individuals. They are encouraged to work through their issues, and are able to access safer prisons representatives, Listeners and the mental health team. The Board tries to see them

when carrying out their rota visits, and has noted positive interactions between them and the officers.

4.3.5 Force was used to control prisoners on 362 occasions during this reporting year, compared with 349 last year, showing an increase of 3.7%. When the Board was present to observe the use of control and restraint, no concerns were raised. The Board is invited to the use of force meeting. The Board members take it in turns to attend the meeting, which gives all of the members an opportunity to observe the way that use of force is employed.

4.4 Security

4.4.1 A violence reduction/security tasking meeting of governors and key members of staff has been in force for the last 12 months. The meeting is held weekly, with the remit to discuss any problematic prisoners, trends and 'hotspots' as they arise. All options available to pre-empt disruptive behaviour are then discussed. A Board member attends on an ad-hoc basis, and notes the level of intelligence both gathered and acted upon in a proactive manner. A full security meeting is held monthly, chaired by the security governor, and is attended by the senior management team, police liaison officers and others.

4.4.2 The number of reportable incidents during the reporting year is as set out below:
Number of assaults in 2018: 373 (275 resident on resident, and 98 resident on staff)
Number of assaults in 2019: 407 (288 resident on resident, and 119 resident on staff)
This represents an increase of 10%.

Number of incidents of self-harm in 2018: 407
Number of incidents of self-harm in 2019: 513
This represents an increase of 26%.

Number of disorder incidents in 2019: 82 in total (28 incidents at height, 49 barricade, four concerted indiscipline, and one hostage taking).

Number of disorder incidents in 2018: 87 in total (25 incidents at height, 56 barricade, two concerted indiscipline, and four hostage taking).

Total finds in 2018: 217 weapons
Total finds in 2019: 232 weapons
This represents an increase of 7%.

Total finds in 2018: 143 alcohol/hooch
Total finds in 2019: 261 alcohol/hooch
This represents an increase of 82%

During the reporting year, 296 mobile phones and associated equipment were found during cell searches. It is worth noting that a dedicated search team was formed towards the end of 2018, so there were more intelligence-led searches conducted in 2019; this accounts for some of the increase in the number of contraband finds.

4.4.3 The Board notes the good working relationship established with the local police. There is good sharing of intelligence, and some successful operations have been carried out. Highpoint's perimeter fences, with easy access from fields and footpaths, leaves it vulnerable. The fences are perceived as a soft target for throw-overs of contraband. Security officers are always quick to respond to reports from staff or members of the public about suspicious behaviour.

4.4.4 During this reporting year, the following drugs finds were made:

Drugs recovered:

Cannabis/cocaine: 127

NPS: 308

Heroin: 8

Tobacco: 64

Others: 173

Throw-overs: 16

The section entitled 'Others' is a combination of:

Unknown quantities of white power/pills

Drugs hidden under postage stamps

Omeprazole/amitriptyline/amphetamine paper

Medications in other prisoners' names

Vape capsules

Wraps of unknown substances

4.5 Drugs and substance misuse

4.5.1 Since our 2018 report, drug and substance misuse has still been at a high level, in particular NPS ('spice'), and cannabis in all of its forms. This is still very much an issue and continues to have an impact upon day-to-day life at the prison. Staff are having to deal with unpredictable behaviour on a regular basis, as well as risks to health from ingesting the fumes. All staff have been advised that if they feel any effects from NPS ('spice'), they should seek medical advice. As in our last report, Tempest unit, in particular, seems to have ongoing issues with this.

4.5.2 Testing is being carried out on a regular basis for PS ('spice'), and cannabis. However, due to the sheer numbers and types of PS, detection is still proving difficult.

4.5.3 As in our last report, the Board recognises the work done by staff and the senior management team around preventing all drugs and substances getting into the establishment. A proactive approach is taken in identifying and searching prisoners believed to be involved in trafficking. However, drugs get in through the post, over the fence or are smuggled in. This is a national problem, with NPS being a concern for many establishments. The Board, again, considers that a major national initiative is needed to disrupt supplies. Given the appropriate resources and staffing, it should be possible to do more to reduce the scale of drug trafficking within a secure and contained environment.

4.6 Drug and substance support

4.6.1 D wing offers support to all prisoners who want to engage fully with drug recovery. This is a safe and secure environment, where prisoners are able to engage with Phoenix Futures. They are offered care and support, to combat the issues they may have with substance abuse. There are issues with prisoners being reluctant to engage and move on to the unit. However, staff work hard to encourage prisoners to engage with part in the programme, and improvements in speeding up the process have seen some success.

4.6.2 Those being discharged from prison can be particularly vulnerable. When leaving the safe confines of a prison, some will lapse into their old ways. Phoenix Futures makes referrals to external agencies which can offer ongoing support.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Diversity and inclusion 2019

5.1.1 HMP Highpoint has an excellent and motivated diversity and inclusion team, comprising an equalities officer (EO), business administrator and independent community diversity officer (CDO) from the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality. The EO has a base on the South site but also services the North site. Only 17.5 hours per week are identified for this role on both prison sites. The allocation of hours remains varied owing to redeployment.

5.1.2 The potential for staff training has been reduced because of the EO's inconsistent allocation of hours. Despite this, the EO locally trained 30 new officers and 10 officer support grades, but no civilian staff. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) does not require any diversity and inclusion training, with the exception of new officers and officer support grades, where it is part of the syllabus. An online training package is available but there is no information available regarding its completion. The EO created a 'Guide to DIRFs (discrimination incident report forms) and their investigation' in April 2019, and this was issued to staff to emphasise the importance of DIRF management.

5.1.3 The CDO holds weekly drop-in sessions for the equalities orderlies on the North site as there is no permanent presence on this site. Orderlies are encouraged to attend for updating, and can bring a prisoner who may wish to discuss a problem directly with the CDO. The EO and CDO aim to be visible and available for prisoner questions or concerns on the South site. The CDO has also completed 11 independent forums with prisoners on North and South sites during 2019.

5.1.4 The CDO trains the equality orderlies, who have responsibilities relating to prisoners for: Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, disability, race equality, older prisoners, those under 25, sexual orientation and foreign nationals.

5.1.5 There is a robust chaplaincy team, which ensures that all prisoners who declare their faith are given opportunities for worship, receive appropriate food and meet with appropriate faith leaders.

5.1.6 Governor grades are also allocated specific responsibilities for protected characteristics relating to staff and prisoners.

5.1.7 There are 220 foreign national prisoners (approximately 21% of the total population), from 50 countries, at the prison. Facilitating deportation is frequently complex and lengthy, regarding the response of the Home Office and foreign embassies. Prisoners will be assessed for transfer to immigration removal centres at the end of their sentence, but some are not deemed suitable, or elect to stay at the prison until their situation is resolved. An immigration officer is based at the prison and engages with prisoners to hear their concerns, and inform and update them. The process can be very frustrating for all concerned.

5.1.8 The equality action team (EAT) meets two-monthly, chaired by a governor. On occasions, the meetings are postponed owing to staffing issues. The equalities orderlies on the South site are encouraged to attend and can contribute to the discussions. The North site has no access to this meeting, although it is recognised that the CDO holds weekly drop-in sessions for them. A comprehensive action plan is agreed and monitored at each EAT meeting. There are monthly initiatives to engage prisoners – for example, different topics using display boards on each wing, menu choices reflecting international festivals and, on occasion, invited speakers. Prisoner DIRFs are all anonymised and presented with the outcomes discussed at the meetings.

5.1.9 During 2019, there were 44 DIRFs submitted and eight via the general complaints system. All were investigated and none upheld. The independent CDO scrutinises them and the results are discussed at governor level, with custody managers, and at the EAT meeting.

Ethnicity of prisoner DIRFs (52) 2019	
ASIAN	7
BLACK	23
MIXED	6
WHITE	14
OTHER	2

Protected Characteristics DIRF (52): 2019	
Disability	5
Religion or belief	7
Race	37
Age	2
Gender reassignment	1

5.1.10 The establishment has a diverse ethnic mix of prisoners, mainly from the London and Essex regions. Rural Suffolk has a predominantly white British population, and staff are drawn from this local population. The need for robust diversity and inclusion training for all staff needs to be prioritised at a national level, to ensure that appropriate monies and facilities are made available.

5.2 Incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme

5.2.1 The Board is pleased to note another decrease in the number of Board applications covering behavioural matters, including the IEP scheme, during the reporting year (26, down from 31 in the previous year). Prisoners are encouraged to 'do the right thing for the right reason', to earn IEP enhancements. Prisoners are expected to take a pride in their environment and living accommodation, and painting and minor repairs are done by the decency team. Although a number of prisoners are on the basic regime, the majority are either standard or enhanced prisoners. Those on basic are given the opportunity to engage with staff and move up to standard as quickly as possible.

5.3 Visits

5.3.1 In this reporting year, the Governor laid on a bus on a Wednesday from central London to the establishment, which was well received by visitors, many of whom could not otherwise visit because of the rural location and lack of public transport. The Board hopes that this will continue, as strengthening family ties, particularly for prisoners who are working towards their release, is vital.

5.3.2 Ormiston Families continues to work hard to provide a relaxed atmosphere, where families can enjoy spending time together. The visits room on the South site has a dedicated play area for children, whereas there is a lack of this facility on the North site.

5.3.4 Ormiston Families, again, report that they have had a very positive year. Family days, lifer days and children's days are held on a regular basis.

6. SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION

6.1 The segregation unit has been very settled over the reporting year. Staff have to deal with very challenging and unpredictable behaviour, and are able to defuse volatile situations when dealing with prisoners.

6.2 HMIP commented, after its 2019 inspection of HMP Highpoint, that the segregation unit was one of the finest in all of the prison estate. The commendation was attributed to the very professional segregation governor and staff.

6.3 During the reporting year, 542 prisoners passed through the unit, compared with 780 in 2018. Progression plans are made to facilitate a return to a residential unit or, where deemed appropriate, a transfer out to another establishment. The segregation governor has attempted to keep the occupancy of the unit low, and return prisoners to normal location. Three prisoners have stayed in the unit for over 42 days; the correct procedure was followed each time.

6.4 Segregation review boards are held with a governor, with members of the mental health team, chaplaincy and Board present. A Board member also visits every prisoner in the unit twice a week, and is always permitted good access.

6.5 During the reporting year, there was a total of 3,624 adjudications, compared with 3,453 in 2018, an increase of 5%. Members have observed these on a weekly basis and noted that prisoners have been shown respect and fairness at the hearings.

6.6 The Board has to report a slight improvement in the frequency of the segregation monitoring and review group meetings, but they are still being cancelled at the last minute due operational reasons. The real value of these meetings comes from attendance and consistency.

7. ACCOMMODATION (INCLUDING COMMUNICATION)

7.1 Cleanliness and tidiness

7.1.1 Cleanliness and tidiness have greatly improved on the residential units since last year. The senior management team carry out rolling checks on all units in turn. A model cell has been produced, to remind staff of the standards required to meet the 'decency agenda', which has been rolled out across both sites. The Board is pleased that the enhanced units reflect well on the prisoners residing there, who take pride in looking after their own and the communal living environment. On other units, the Board has noted that the standard of cleaning has improved, and staff actively make sure that the units are clean and tidy. Prisoners who do not keep their cells clean are monitored by staff and encouraged to clean them daily.

7.1.2 The majority of units now have replacement flooring, and showers have been refurbished or replaced. The Board has been concerned for some time about the flooring on the North site, units 14 and 15, which remains a hazard, as in some places it is worn and lifting. This is a health and safety issue, and the Board hopes that funding will be available in the near future to replace it.

7.2 Works and maintenance

7.2.1 The Board notes that there was a slight improvement in the service provided by GFSL to both North and South sites. However, repairs and maintenance are still not being carried out in a timely manner. During the latter part of 2019, some improvements were being made.

7.2.2 The Board can see that prisoners are carrying out minor maintenance works, which helps; however, we are concerned that other repairs are either not being carried out or are taking a long time to complete, and this is having an impact over both sites. At the end of the reporting year, 911 jobs had not been completed. During 2019, HMPPS has invested considerably in works, including valve replacements in the pump house, fire safety works, laundry equipment and closed-circuit television.

7.2.3 The Board would, once again, point out that the workforce employed within the prison is trying its best to complete the works but is still being hampered by lack of leadership from the GFSL senior management team. The Board understands that GFSL is struggling to recruit the following craftsmen:

- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Painters
- Carpenters
- Supervisor

7.2.4 Specific concerns include:

- General repairs to electrical equipment
- General repairs to plumbing
- Repairs to kitchen equipment, both on the North and South sites.

7.2.5 All of these have an impact on the day-to-day regime. During the reporting year, a start was made on in-cell telephones; this involved the infrastructure, wireways and cabling. All of the cells that are suitable for an in-cell telephone should be up and running during the next reporting year. The Board trusts that HMPPS will ensure a review of the works maintenance contract provided by GFSL, to ensure that it fully meets the needs of a challenging prison environment.

7.3 Regime

7.3.1 The Board notes that regimes are well managed, with most days having few disruptions. The senior management team has streamlined movements, which means that they are carried out in a timely manner. They also visit units on a regular basis. If there is a need to contain prisoners, 'spurring off' of wings is used to manage these times. More staff means that prisoners can be managed, whether on the wings or needing to be escorted around the prison.

7.4 Catering and canteen

7.4.1 The North and South sites combined produce well over 2,500 meals each day. The Board has tasted food at the point of serving on an ad hoc basis, and been satisfied as to quality. Any shortfall in the number of meals received on the units is taken up promptly with the kitchen, to ensure that everyone receives food.

7.4.2 The kitchens are run extremely efficiently, with good teamwork between the prisoners employed and the staff running them. Although, at times, they are frustrated by equipment not working, they get meals out to the units on schedule. GFSL has made efforts of late to repair/replace machinery, but only after many months of chasing. With the knowledge and experience gained by working in the kitchens, there should be openings for employment for prisoners once released, although no formal qualifications are available at present.

7.4.3 Prisoners have the opportunity to raise issues about their meals on a daily basis via a food comments book kept in every unit servery. The Board notes that there has been an improvement in the availability of these books, and in managers regularly checking and acting on the comments. However, food committee meetings are sporadic. It is important that these meetings take place on a regular basis, so that prisoners have the opportunity to input their views of the food that is served.

7.5 Property

7.5.1 The Board has received 133 applications about lost property, of which 83 were from prisoners who had transferred from other establishments.

7.5.2 As one of our Board members noted during the year, 'Whatever the prisoners come to prison for, it is certainly not to lose their property'. Applications regarding property remain a significant issue, both locally at Highpoint and nationally, as evidenced by the correspondence from the national IMB on this subject. Property is important to individual prisoners, particularly those serving longer sentences, as it may contain important documents or personal items, such as family letters or photographs, which cannot be replaced.

7.5.3 It was felt that one particular issue was the transfer of property between establishments. The seeming lack of space on transfer vehicles frequently leads to the separation of an individual from his or her property. As a Board member, trying to trace property that has gone missing in an establishment other than the one to which you are attached is very difficult, particularly if the individual has had two or more transfers between establishments.

7.5.4 A survey was carried out at the establishment between January and December 2019, to see what proportion of applications to the Board related to property, and, of these, how many related to property becoming mislaid at another establishment. While this is not a

validated study, it is a snapshot which shows that, on average, one in three of the applications to the Board in 2019 related to property. Of these property complaints, an average of 69%, nearly three in every four, related to property going missing at another establishment or while being transferred from one establishment to another. While it is frequently possible to resolve what has happened to property that is mislaid in the establishment to which a Board member is attached, it is similarly frequently not possible to establish what has happened to property mislaid elsewhere. This leads to unnecessary hours being spent by prison staff and Board members trying to locate the property and, most significantly, frustration and disgruntlement among prisoners.

7.5.5 Again, the Board asks the minister to order an urgent review of the handling of prisoners' property.

7.6 Staff-prisoner relationships

7.6.1 On the whole, staff-prisoner relationships have continued to improve. Members of the Board have seen examples of good interactions with prisoners, and comment on this in their rota reports. However, it is noted that OMiC has not been able to be delivered as planned, which has seen prisoners not being able to access their key worker for the recommended allocated time. This, we believe, has a detrimental effect on prisoners being able to resolve issues in a timely manner. However, there has still been an increase in the number of uniformed officers on the units, and units are more settled.

8. HEALTHCARE (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

8.1 Care UK provides healthcare services on the North and South sites. Both sites are managed by a head of healthcare and offer similar services to prisoners. The head of healthcare or the deputy is also able to attend daily management briefings, and has access to a designated governor to enable accelerated management of issues/problems.

8.2 Care UK will continue to be the healthcare provider following renewal of their contract. It is anticipated that there will be no significant changes to the contract, and the new staffing model includes a health trainer, an associate nurse for primary care and a mental health nurse associate.

8.3 A seven-day nurse-led service is provided, but not on a 24-hour basis. Two general practitioners (GPs), supplemented by locum GPs, are employed to provide medical care to prisoners. During the healthcare centre opening hours, emergencies are initially managed in-house, calling on external emergency services as required. Emergencies are, by their nature, largely unpredictable, and this offers challenges to the healthcare team, which may have to delay appointments to meet this need.

8.4 Emergencies outside these hours are managed via the NHS 111 service and paramedic/emergency ambulance call-out. If a prisoner needs to attend the local hospital

for emergency inpatient or outpatient treatment, officers are deployed to facilitate this. Prison officers also receive first-aid training, including use of the automated defibrillator.

8.5 A registered nurse completes an initial healthcare assessment on each prisoner in reception. The waiting time for non-urgent appointments with the GP averages 12 working days. Prisoners with an urgent need can request to see a registered nurse, who will triage them and advise appropriate action. During the reporting year, the service provider has experienced some difficulties in filling a GP post left vacant after the retirement of a regular doctor. Clinic numbers have been reduced at times and there has been more locum cover. Despite this, the healthcare team has managed largely to meet demand.

8.6 DNAs (Did Not Attends) remain a problem, with about one in five appointments turning into a DNA. Healthcare staff send out appointment slips to each individual, and appointments are logged on the shared computer drive, so prison staff should be aware who has an appointment at the healthcare centre.

8.7 HMIP inspectors visited the establishment during the reporting year and noted a lack of oversight of clinical appointment bookings for patients who moved from the South to North site, or vice versa.

8.8 A comprehensive range of nurse-led clinics is provided, with established links to external specialists in the community. The following services are also provided on both sites: a diabetes care specialist nurse; physiotherapy; optical care; chiropody; aortic aneurism assessment; and sexual health.

8.9 The quality and outcome figures are respectable for the reporting year, with no 'red' clinical indicators (that is, indicating that performance is significantly below target). It is notable that the indicators for hypertension, heart failure, secondary prevention of coronary heart disease, stroke and transient ischaemic attack are all 'amber'. These are long-term conditions that will present a significant increase in health risk to prisoners if they are not managed adequately. HMIP inspectors noted that not all patients with long-term conditions had a specific care plan in place during their 2019 visit.

8.10 Dental services remain an issue. Waiting times have increased, with the percentage of patients not seen within six weeks rising from 31.25% in December 2018 to 46% in January 2019. Currently the dental contract is subcontracted from Care UK to Community Dental Services (CDS), but when the new contract is implemented, CDS will be directly commissioned by NHS England. It has been confirmed that there will be extra dental sessions provided with the new contract.

8.11 On their visit in 2019, HMIP noted that the floor in the dental suite on the South site did not meet infection control standards, and this is due to be rectified.

8.12 The wellbeing and suicide prevention service continues to engage with 70–75 prisoners each month. There is also an emphasis on trying to improve health while in prison. Prisoners are encouraged to attend these sessions but they are not compulsory.

8.13 Healthcare representatives from each unit are encouraged to attend forums held five to six times per year. Their ideas, suggestions and concerns are valued and, where appropriate, may be implemented – for example, the delivery of appointment information direct to cell.

8.14 Mental health services are provided by a team of registered nurses, who manage prisoners with acute long-term mental health issues. The team has been strengthened during this reporting year with the appointment of more support workers who can deal with the less severe problems, allowing the mental health nurses to focus on more complex cases.

8.15 HMIP inspectors noted that, of three prisoners transferred to hospital under the Mental Health Act in the previous year, none had been transferred within the 14-day guideline, and the longest wait had been 87 days. While these delays were not the fault of the establishment, they were noted to be unacceptable.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 Part-time education courses still have a good take-up, and qualifications are achievable for the prisoners who reach the required standard. The head of learning and skills provided the Board with the current prisoner pay rates and a list of the courses that are available.

The current pay rates are:

Part-time education: £10.00 per week

Full-time education: £15.00 per week

9.2 All new arrivals are assessed for literacy and numeracy, and given advice on what type of course would be suitable for their needs. There is a range of educational courses, from basic to advanced. Most courses are part time, and students can gain various qualifications from completing these courses. There are some full-time courses, which are usually those involving practical skills such as bricklaying, plumbing, painting and decorating, and hairdressing. The prisoners gain a standard qualification which can transfer to the workplace. Vocational courses are very popular and are well subscribed to.

10. WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

10.1 Range and take-up of training and employment

10.1.1 The Board acknowledges the drive to engage most prisoners in work or education. The wide range of work available ensures that all can be given a daily routine.

Qualifications are achievable in vocational skills, and all workshops help prisoners with understanding basic English and mathematics.

10.1.2 We have taken a snapshot for the month of July 2019, to give an example of how many prisoners were engaged in purposeful activity:

- Highpoint had a population of 1,265 (904 on the South site and 361 on the North site).
- There were 786 work and education spaces available on the South site, of which 756 job spaces were filled, representing 86% of the South site population.
- There were 339 work and education spaces available on the North site, of which 319 were filled. Representing 94% of the population.
- Across both sites, there were 409 cleaning spaces available (36% of all jobs available).
- 331 education and vocational jobs were available (29% of all jobs available).
- 225 industrial jobs were available (20% of all jobs available).
- The other 15% of jobs available is made up from gardens, kitchens and peer support work roles.

Embedded learning has expanded to include some wing-based roles and industries alongside the segregation unit, gardens and kitchens.

10.1.3 Within the reporting year, the percentage of unemployed prisoners was 19.50%, an increase from 15% last year. This includes retired prisoners and those who are unwell. Attendance records for the year show an above-target attendance in the workshops.

10.1.4 The recruitment of workshop instructors by the education provider is still proving difficult, mainly because of the lower wages offered. The Board notes that the welding shop is closed, and that there seems to be no sign of it being opened again in the near future. This was a great opportunity for prisoners to gain qualifications in a transferable skill.

10.1.5 The Board is, again, disappointed that work on opening the vocational skills workshop on the South site has been postponed until an instructor is appointed; these skills are therefore only available on the North site.

10.2 Employer engagement partnership

10.2.1 The employer engagement forums and 'employability fayres' have gone from strength to strength during this reporting year, with the establishment continuing to develop new and existing links with local employers, agencies and voluntary groups, including Job Centre Plus, SAAFA, debt advisers and St Mungo's.

10.2.2 The number of release on temporary licence (ROTL) placements at the beginning of the reporting year increased from two to eight, with prisoners working in the community at Sue Ryder, Timpson's, Community Sports Association and the Food Bank, and also working in the prison's outside stores. However, some prisoners have then moved on to open conditions, so the number has fluctuated throughout the year.

10.2.3 Courses run through engagement with external partners have included Kier, and Flip Flop Marketing, which have both given prisoners job opportunities. The 'Making Ground' programme and Macs Plasterboard Systems' 'dry lining and plasterboard training' have led to some prisoners being offered interviews and employment.

10.2.4 The Board recognises the contribution made by the Business and Community Engagement programme, which is made up of external businesses and agencies, continues to play in improving rehabilitative and employment opportunities for Highpoint's prisoners. Open Reach carried out assessments on seven prisoners, with one prisoner being offered an apprenticeship.

10.2.5 A sensory garden is now almost finished, with VolkerFitzpatrick (one of the leading engineering and construction companies in the UK, providing specialist building, civil engineering and rail expertise to the market) offering to supply all that was needed, at no cost to the prison, apart from the cost involved with supervising the prisoners and training them to do the work. This garden will be a quiet place for staff and prisoners to use, and will be particularly therapeutic for those with mental health problems.

10.2.6 A 'Being a Dad' day took place on both the South and the North sites throughout the reporting year, with the Ormiston Trust looking at such matters as play, and mental health in children. It was also attended by a family solicitor.

10.2.7 Two prisoners have written to the Board during the reporting year, to express their thanks to the senior management team, officers and staff involved in the Amends programme, saying that this had turned their lives around and that they were now working towards their release, and taking up the opportunities that they had been offered.

11. RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.10MU and Resettlement

11.1.1 The resettlement team includes representatives of all those involved in resettlement. They meet two-monthly and cover every aspect of helping prisoners during their time in HMP Highpoint. Well-thought-out programmes are helpful to the prisoners who attend them. However, there are still prisoners who do not want to engage with the team, for whatever reason.

11.1.2 The second phase of offender management in custody is being instigated, with probation and offender management unit staff being located into one unit. Staff numbers have had some difficulties in keeping up with what was required but what they have delivered has been generally well received by the prisoners.

11.1.3 Prisoners are seen as soon as possible on arrival at the establishment. Monthly targets are not always achieved but this can be due to a number of prisoners being located at the end of a month.

11.1.4 Twelve weeks prior to release, prisoners are seen by resettlement staff. Help is given with arranging accommodation, universal credit, employment, housing benefit and opening bank accounts before release, whenever possible. Of the 541 prisoners released during the reporting year 84 prisoners were classed as 'No Fixed Abode'. This figure includes those who, for whatever reason, either would not give an address or wouldn't engage with the resettlement team, and also those for whom accommodation could not be found.

11.1.5 Highpoint is a retraining prison for London and Essex. Its remoteness and lack of door-to-door public transport makes it difficult for visitors to attend. The Board commends the governor for regularly providing a bus to transport visitors from London. This helps maintain family ties, although there are still 300–400 prisoners who have no visits. Some state that they do not want visitors. A survey is being carried out to determine reasons for those not receiving visitors and to see if anything can be done to help.

11.2 Amends, rehabilitative culture

11.2.1 This culture is an initiative preparing prisoners for release. Prisoners take on responsibility for the cleanliness of their units/wings. They have facilities which enable them to cook their own food, with several units having had new kitchen facilities installed by the prisoners themselves. Prisoners really benefit from this, as many have not had any previous cooking skills. Personal hygiene and a clean cell are giving prisoners the basics of being a member of a wider community.

11.2.2 Prisoners who are suitably trained and security checked carry out work in the prison. This includes decency cleaning, plumbing, flooring, carpentry and tiling.

11.2.3 In-depth offender case studies are held, overseen by the head of reducing reoffending. Outside agencies and departments within the prison share good practice by taking a prisoner through his journey from arriving at the establishment to release. By working together and assessing these studies, the staff make sure that the prisoner's journey is a satisfactory one.

11.2.4 The establishment houses immigration detainees who do not meet the criteria for transfer to an immigration removal centre. These detainees, together with lifers and prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence, helped with preparing for parole board hearings and deportation plans.

C: THE WORK OF THE IMB

The Board held its annual team performance review in March 2019. This involved a training session on mentoring, planning on how best to develop and take forward its monitoring role, and a review of the Board’s performance, aims and priorities. Training has included drug awareness, employability, Amends update , personal protection training and mentoring training.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14
Total number of visits to the establishment	700
Total number of segregation reviews attended	103

D: APPLICATIONS TO THE IMB

	(It should be noted that the number of IMB applications has reduced by 34% in the current reporting year.)	Current Reporting Year 2019	Previous reporting year 2018
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	17	21
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	26	31

C	Equality	9	7
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	24	12
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	26	22
E 2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	10	23
F	Food and kitchens	9	5
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	52	66
H 1	Property within this establishment	50	52
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	83	95
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	17	24
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, ROTL, parole, release dates, recategorisation	36	57
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	44	63
K	Transfers	34	54
L	Miscellaneous	33	27
	Total number of IMB applications	470	559