



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI PORTLAND

**For reporting year
01 April 2019 – 31 March 2020**

Published July 2020



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Introductory 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 is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- 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
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- 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.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI Portland is a category C prison for adult prisoners with sentences of six months to four years. It is also, currently, a national resource for young offenders (aged 18-21years). It is a designated resettlement prison for prisoners with a home in contract package area 13, Avon, Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. Portland began the process to transition into a Category C, adult male prison in January 2020. At this time, Dorset became a part of its catchment area.

The operational capacity of the prison is 530 prisoners. Accommodation consists of seven wings: Benbow, Raleigh, Drake, Nelson, Grenville, Collingwood and Beaufort. There is a free-standing care and separation unit (CSU). Collingwood is assigned the role of first night centre. Nelson and Grenville are primarily populated by young offenders. Beaufort houses self-isolating prisoners.

Education, including some vocational training programmes, is contracted to Weston College. The prison operates a number of workshops, providing recognised skills and qualifications.

Healthcare services are delivered by Care UK Health and Rehabilitation Services Ltd. ('Care UK'). Resettlement Services are provided by Catch 22, part of Seetec.

Charitable organisations operating in the prison include Samaritans, Barnardo's, the Shaw Trust, Key4Life, the Shannon Trust and Turning Point

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

This report is compiled according to the policy of the Board, which is not to include any item or issue which has not first been recorded in weekly rota reports, or a periodic wing or departmental report. It includes observations from meetings attended whilst performing the regular monitoring which forms our role and responsibility in Portland.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults has reduced; however, numbers are still higher than would be anticipated based on the age range of the population. Assaults on staff continue to occur, albeit to a lesser extent than prisoner-on-prisoner assaults.

The ingress of illicit substances continues to present problems for the prison. Drug-related debt, extortion, violence, self-harm and mental health issues are a constant feature of life in Portland.

There has been some progress in relation to the oversight and management of complex offenders and vulnerable prisoners. Greater collaboration between service providers and the introduction of key workers have been beneficial. Unfortunately the roll out of the key worker scheme has been slow and this has had an impact on developments.

The initiative on Beaufort wing for self-isolating prisoners is a positive step forward in meeting the needs of this group.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

There is evidence suggesting that prisoners in Portland are not always treated with compassion and fairness as demonstrated by:

- the lack of challenge to the poor standards of maintenance and repair of the buildings
- the seeming lack of concern from some staff regarding the conditions in which prisoners are living and working
- the unhelpful attitudes and behaviour shown by some staff towards prisoners
- evidence that some groups of prisoner are not getting equal access to opportunities

However, there is some evidence that, after several months without a fully functioning equalities lead, the diversity and race equality action team (DREAT) is starting to get a grip on the extent of the problem and is beginning to identify training needs for staff.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Portland's struggle to reliably deliver a daily regime – including education and employment opportunities and time out of cell – has had an impact on prisoner health and well-being, as well as stability around the prison.

Problems with the appointment and retention of mental health and psychology staff have added to prisoner stress levels. Delays in diagnosis and treatments have had an impact on prisoner health and well-being. They have also put pressure on operational staff and others dealing with prisoners on a daily basis. Mental health nurses have expressed concerns that, for too long, treatment for this group of prisoners has centred on medication rather than therapeutic interventions.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The resumption in the delivery of accredited offending behaviour programmes is a step forward for prisoners.

The slight increase in the opportunities to access release on temporary licence (ROTL) in the local community is also welcomed. Board members hope that this will be further extended, in line with the change to the profile of the prison and its status as a resettlement prison for Dorset prisoners.

Unfortunately, regular shutdowns have had an impact on opportunities for prisoners to develop education and work skills and achieve qualifications to assist in securing employment on release.

The move to release more local prisoners has caused additional pressure because of the lack of accommodation available through local authorities in Dorset. There is a lack of night shelter facilities and move-on supported housing in the area, and the indications are that there will be no change in this situation.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Over 50% of prisoners present as being of no fixed abode on arrival at Portland. As a consequence of changes to the prison profile, Dorset prisoners will now be released from Portland. There is a dearth of accommodation available through local authorities in the area.

Poole and Bournemouth Council has indicated to the prison that there will be no additional investment or change to their current policy, which serves to limit the availability of night-shelter facilities and move-on supported housing provision for released prisoners.

The resettlement team in Portland has been pro-active in developing links with independent housing providers. The reality is, however, that without more substantial support on release, this group is unlikely to make the changes necessary to turn their lives around.

In order to maximise the opportunities for learning and change provided to prisoners while in custody, investment needs to be put into accommodation, employment and learning opportunities in the community post-release.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Structural repairs that are urgently required to the fabric of buildings, plumbing, heating and telephony systems in Portland need to be investigated and addressed accordingly. An updated assessment of health and safety conditions in the workshops also needs to be undertaken, and any failings put right.

Systems to ensure the safe storage of prisoner property whilst they are in custody, and specifically during inter-prison transfers, need addressing. The amount of property which has been logged on property cards and then goes missing is unacceptable. It causes prisoners distress and diminishes trust and confidence in the prison service.

Checks need to be put in place to ensure that critically unwell prisoners, suffering significant health problems, cannot be unilaterally transferred. Should this ever be necessary, it should not happen without prior negotiation with the receiving establishment and the provision of up to date and comprehensive medical records.

TO THE GOVERNOR

For a number of years, Portland has been unable to deliver a regime that meets the requirements of its prisoner population. Shutdowns are frequent, and last minute changes to the daily regime a regular occurrence. This is to the detriment of education and work opportunities for prisoners and the delivery of substance misuse and offending behaviour programmes. It has a destabilising impact on the prisoner population, in general, and emotionally vulnerable prisoners in particular.

Prisoners from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, those with mental health problems and those with other protected characteristics have indicated that they do not feel understood or supported by operational staff on the wings. Confidence in discrimination incident reporting and the complaints process is low. Prisoners have indicated that they do not feel the system in Portland is working for them. Operational staff have identified deficits in their knowledge, skills and ability when working with some prisoner groups. Collaborative work between staff and prisoner representatives has begun to identify training needs to be addressed in order to ensure that Portland delivers a fair and humane environment for all its residents.

The Board continues to have concerns about some aspects of use of force practises – specifically, the failure of staff to wear and/or switch on body-worn cameras. The recovery of closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage from the wings is still problematic. The timely and adequate completion of use of force paperwork has

improved, with fewer outstanding reports, but continues to require regular monitoring.

The provision of healthcare services has suffered for lack of a psychologist and psychiatrist at times during the reporting period. The appointment and retention of psychologists and psychiatrists to posts in Portland have been problematic since the contract transferred from the local health authority. It would be helpful if the reasons for this could be explored and, where possible, addressed.

The number of prisoners failing to attend for pre-arranged healthcare appointments because operational support grade (OSG) staff have not followed agreed protocols is not acceptable. This is the second year running that this situation has ensued.

The ingress of illicit drugs into Portland needs to be addressed. It is having an impact on the health and well-being of prisoners and staff, and is linked to debt, bullying, violence, isolation and overall stability in the prison.

3.4 Progress since the last report

Safety

Portland has worked to address criticism of its approach to Safety following a Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection last year. Whilst levels of prisoner violence remain high, the initiatives introduced by the safer custody team have seen reductions of approximately 50% in the figures for prisoner-on-prisoner assaults during the first three months of 2020, as opposed to the same period in 2019.

The number of prisoners choosing to self-isolate has seen a considerable increase in recent years. The introduction of a supportive regime on Beaufort wing aimed at re-integration is seeing early success. It has significantly improved the regime delivered for this group and, at the same time, contributed to a reduction in its numbers.

The introduction of the 'safety hotline' for families in November 2019 is a positive move.

Fair and Humane Treatment

The introduction of the key worker system, albeit slowly and ad hoc, has had a positive impact for those prisoners allocated a worker.

Prisoners on assessment, care in custody and team work (ACCT) plans and those whose progress is being monitored under a challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) are being motivated and encouraged to address their treatment plans, with the support and encouragement of key workers.

The re-integration strategy, devised by staff in the CSU to support prisoners reluctant or anxious about a return to life on main location, is proving to be a positive initiative.

Health and well-being

Overall the Board are reporting similar concerns to those we raised in our last report:

- There has been a failure to address the ingress of illicit drugs and substance misuse in the prison.
- Ongoing problems recruiting and retaining a psychologist and a psychiatrist have affected the assessment and treatment of prisoners requiring these services.
- Agreed procedures to ensure that prisoners get to healthcare appointments have been ignored by operational and OSG staff, resulting in failures in the delivery of essential services.

However, the conclusion of the current reporting period coincides with the early stages of the coronavirus crisis. This period has seen improvements in collaboration and co-operation between operational and healthcare staff.

Progression and Release

The range of education and employment opportunities on offer in Portland is good. Prisoner access to these opportunities, as well as other activities, continues to be impeded by the number of shutdowns.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The reception process generally operates smoothly. However, there were several instances when men medically unfit for travel have arrived at Portland. Among the worst examples was a sick prisoner who had to be transferred straight from reception to outside hospital, where he remained for several weeks. On a second occasion, a prisoner with a history of seizures had been unwell throughout the journey and had to be carried off the transport.

On both of these occasions, no alert as to the medical condition of the prisoners had been provided by the sending establishment, HMP Bristol, and medical records on transfer were inadequate and needed updating. Lack of prior notification meant that health and operational staff involved in the reception and first night processes were unprepared for these prisoners.

Such transfers and the transfer of prisoners with outstanding hospital appointments for specialist treatments have significant impact on the delivery of the regime in Portland, where any additional demands on staff resources, such as bed-watches and hospital escorts, result in the shutdown of activities.

Prisoners spend their first night on Collingwood wing, where cells are in a reasonable state. The atmosphere there is positive and welcoming. However, for a number of years there has only been one functioning telephone on the wing for prisoners.

The induction process is more problematic. Regular cancellation of induction sessions because of lockdowns result in significant backlogs, which have proved impossible for induction staff to address.

The Board have ongoing concerns that Portland is not supporting and facilitating an effective induction regime.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The Board regret to report the death of a prisoner whilst in custody in Portland. We wish to extend our sincere condolences to his family.

The weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM) is now well established. Representatives from all relevant service providers attend. The SIM oversees the management of complex offenders; vulnerable prisoners subject to ACCT arrangements; self-isolating prisoners; prisoners located in the CSU and prisoners subject to CSIPs.

The number of prisoners to be discussed at these meetings limits the time that can be devoted to any one individual. However, it is a useful forum that retains oversight of vulnerable and challenging prisoners, and progress on interventions identified for them.

The number of prisoners on ACCT plans increased during the early part of the reporting year, then steadied at around thirty. However, as the year progressed, the numbers increased again. Forty ACCT books were opened in September 2019.

This was an increase of 19 on the previous month, and 23 more than the same period in 2018. By October 2019, there were 43 ACCT books opened. These numbers placed significant pressures on the regime, and on individual staff monitoring and supporting care plans.

Whilst a challenging period for the prison, with staff having to monitor and manage several disturbed prisoners, some awaiting assessment and transfer to mental health hospitals, this provides a positive example of effective multi-agency collaboration in Portland.

During a safer custody meeting in November, participants identified some of the consistent themes around the prison which were contributing to the distress, and unpredictable and erratic behaviour among vulnerable prisoners. These included:

- regular short notice regime changes
- delays in accessing work and activity opportunities
- a shortage of gym staff, which restricted exercise opportunities
- difficulties in accessing showers and making phone calls

Overall, there has been an improvement in the quality of interactions with prisoners subject to ACCT processes. The safer custody department has embedded management checks into the regime, resulting in more relevant and timely recording of ACCT entries.

Access to a Samaritans telephone is available on all wings for prisoner use. There is also a duty Listener rota on most residential wings, although prisoners complain that they are not always given access to this service by wing staff when they request it.

At a safety meeting in January 2020, the Samaritans lead expressed concern that Portland was not good at calling on Listeners to support prisoners in distress. This is a concern that she has expressed at meetings in the past and raised previously with the Board. She pointed out that prison statistics evidenced that there had been only four Listeners called out in the preceding two months. By contrast, 368 telephone calls to the Samaritans office had been made by Portland prisoners in only one month of this period.

In November 2019, a 'safety hotline' for family members with concerns about a prisoner's wellbeing was set up. A prisoner council has been introduced as a support for self-isolating individuals who are in distress. Additionally, as resources have allowed, key worker interventions for the most vulnerable prisoners subject to ACCT arrangements have been implemented.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Prisoner-on-prisoner violence and bullying continue to be a feature of life in Portland. In recent years, levels of violence have been very high, and while there has been some reduction, incidents/suspected incidents of violence and bullying are regularly recorded in observation logs on the wings.

Efforts have been made to address safety and the high levels of violence following concerns raised in a recent HMIP inspection. The CSIP scheme has now been embedded, and acts of violence are referred and investigated, and a comprehensive, individualised plan is then put in place, aimed at reducing repetition.

There were 35 recorded prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the first three months of this year. This saw a significant reduction on the figures for the same three month period in 2019, during which time the numbers were averaging 20-25 assaults per month. Violent incidents are most often found to be debt/drug related.

There were 11 assaults on members of staff in the first three months of this year, which more or less mirrors the figures for the same period in 2019.

The delivery of support and intervention for men self-isolating in the establishment was transformed in the last months of the reporting period, with areas of Beaufort wing designated a specialist support unit. An improved regime is now being offered to this group of prisoners. Support and guidance is provided to these prisoners on debt management, substance misuse and work opportunities. Peer mentors provide moral support and advice. Staff members support prisoners to plan for re-integration into the normal regime. Moreover, unlike previously this group now have regular access to open air, exercise and domestic periods.

This has seen a considerable reduction in the number of self-isolators who once averaged 28 during the reporting period but by the end of the period was down to 10 men.

4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding

This area has progressively seen improvement as a consequence of a more integrated, multidisciplinary approach to the oversight of this group of prisoners. There is now regular attendance and informed contributions at SIMs by progression and resettlement staff, nurses, mental health and psychology specialists.

4.5 Use of force

Training and awareness in practice and procedures has been driven by the safety department. Incident analysis and regular reviews of the quality and timeliness of use of force documentation have been introduced and have brought about improvements. This latter is not yet fully embedded and requires regular management oversight as, historically, the completion of use of force documentation has been problematic.

Rigid handcuffs are now issued to all operational members of staff, and this has resulted in an increase in their use.

Not all prison officers pick up or switch on body worn cameras.

The Board has seen a decline in the number of applications from prisoners concerning use of force incidents. It is still a concern that those that are brought to our attention often evidence that body- worn cameras were not available or had not been switched on, and that CCTV camera footage on the landings could not be accessed.

4.6 Substance misuse

There is a zero-tolerance strategy for illicit substances, and regular testing takes place. A Rapiscan machine was purchased to screen prisoner mail. Despite this, drugs continue to get into the prison. Prisoners are regularly found under the

influence of drugs or hooch, and this is often linked with debt, disorder, ill-health and self-isolation.

Prisoners on a methadone prescription, around 60-70 individuals at any one time, are particularly vulnerable. The distribution of prescribed medication is monitored on the wings but nurses express concerns that some prisoners remain subject to bullying and extortion from fellow prisoners.

The substance misuse team runs several schemes and provides valued support to prisoners seeking to maintain abstinence.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The age and overall condition of the buildings are aggravated by the failure to expedite repairs and maintenance. There is a lack of challenge to poor standards of maintenance and repair.

Cells are too small and inadequately furnished for one person, let alone the two that sometimes have to share them. They are often found to lack sufficient bedding for the number of residents. There is no decency screening around the toilets. Sinks, toilets and windows are often badly fitting. During the year, storage space was inadequate, resulting in prisoner property being stored on the floor under the bunk bed.

There is a long-standing problem with showers on Nelson and Grenville wings. This is caused by a problem with water pressure. Only one shower works on Nelson wing and on Grenville wing the showers only run cold water. In October 2019, only three showers were operational for the 138 residents on these wings. This has been a problem for a number of years.

Funding was provided for refurbishment of the shower areas on Collingwood, Raleigh and Benbow wings during the year and this has now been completed.

A cell refurbishment programme began in October 2019 but progress has been slow and primarily decorative, covering graffiti and brightening the wings. A quantity of cell furnishings has recently been provided and more is promised.

The Board fears that this superficial improvement plan, albeit welcomed, will not address the significant structural improvements required to render the residential accommodation a healthy, habitable and humane environment for the prisoners.

Overall the standard of cleanliness on the yards, stairs and around the servery areas on wings is poor. Periodic, management-directed clean-up campaigns result in considerable improvement. Unfortunately these are not sustainable for any length of time, and conditions, once again, deteriorate.

There are insufficient telephones for prisoner use on the wings. One wing has eight telephones for 87 prisoners. Those provided are often found to be out of order, with repairs seeming to take an inordinate amount of time. For a number of years, there has been one telephone operational for prisoners on Collingwood wing, the

designated first night centre. This problem results from an underground wiring problem that would be expensive to put right.

Clothing and Kit: - In June 2019, a management led review of kit identified:

- Not all prisoners had the required allocation.
- Some kit was in poor condition, including towels and bedding.
- Prisoners with good kit were frightened to put it into the laundry because they would not get it back.

In July 2019, a new order of kit arrived, and a full kit change was profiled to take place. Despite this, problems have continued into 2020. Complaints from prisoners during this period relate to inadequate clothing provision for poor weather conditions and inadequate bedding and cleaning equipment in cells.

Some prisoners have only been given one set of clothing at reception, and required to wear these until the next kit change.

Kitchen and Food: The Board generally finds the food provided to be of a reasonable standard. Trolley replacements have resolved complaints that it arrived on the wings cold. The choice of menu is limited. The hot meal continues to be served at lunch time with a cold snack supper and breakfast pack handed out at 4.30pm.

Prisoners have repeatedly complained about the limited menu choices and the serving of the hot meal in the middle of the day but, despite an agreement from the Governor last year that this latter would be changed, this has not yet taken place.

Portland has had difficulty recruiting Muslim prisoners to work in the kitchens for a number of years. The prisoners, themselves, put this down to their lack of confidence working in the environment and their fear of being sacked. Kitchen staff have tended to interpret this as an unwillingness to work.

In January 2020, an Imam on temporary placement in Portland, produced a report on Halal/Faith dietary provision within the prison. This identified that a failure to recruit Muslim prisoners had, seemingly, also resulted in a limited understanding of Halal requirements around the prison. A range of recommendations were put forward to the senior management team including shortfalls in the prison's catering facilities and improved practises required on wings as well as in the kitchen. Progress against which continues to be monitored by the resident Imam.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

The CSU has twelve cells, which include two holding cells.

During the reporting period 3-5 cells have been out of action at any one time. This was usually the result of vandalism by the occupants. Repairs, replacement and renewal by the maintenance contractor were tardy and prolonged. Difficulty accessing the correct parts and materials were blamed for this.

Three officers and a governor run the unit. This is generally adequate, except during the daily adjudication hearings, when officer cover, to answer telephone calls or cell bells, is not available. This problem can also affect the serving of the lunchtime meal and the delivery of the CSU regime to residents.

Adjudications are carried out conscientiously.

Good Order or Discipline (GOOD) reviews take place at a specified time, allowing a Board representative to be present. Overall, they are well conducted, with time and patience given to each man to encourage participation and consensus on a progression strategy.

During the early part of the reporting year there were problems because of the non-attendance of health care representatives – specifically, mental health and psychology.

Improvements this year include the move of venue for reviews, from the adjudication room to a more comfortable private office space. The occasional attendance of a representative from the offender management unit (OMU) was also appreciated by prisoners.

CSU staff have begun to introduce a reintegration strategy. This allows some prisoners who are coming to the end of their stay on the unit the opportunity to transfer to an adjacent wing on main location. This gives them access to a television, and they can continue to use showers and exercise facilities in the CSU. This is to address a significant, long-standing problem, whereby prisoners opt to breach rules to get put into the CSU, thus avoiding debt collectors, drug peddlers or intimidation from other prisoners. Once on the unit, they then refuse to leave.

Plans are in motion to introduce in-cell televisions for some residents on the unit.

Board members have concerns about the range of responsibilities placed on the unit. Prisoners on GOOD or Rule 45 are appropriately situated. However, throughout the year the unit was used to house:

- prisoners on ACCTs with frequent observation requirements (at times, up to three such residents at any one time)
- prisoners exhibiting severe mental health problems who were awaiting assessment, sectioning or relocation to secure hospital accommodation
- a prisoner with significant physical health problems requiring daily visits, in a wheelchair, to the healthcare building for treatment and medication.

Board members feel that the CSU, with its limited regime, is an unsuitable environment for men suffering serious mental and/or physical health problems, and that the unit staff are inadequately trained to manage them. These pressures on staff serve to have a further impact on the delivery of the regime for other residents.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

Over the last year prisoner applications to the Board regarding staff/prisoner relationships and bullying, which had seen a decline in previous years, saw a 33% increase.

It is difficult to generalise about staff/prisoner relationships in Portland. Individual officers and non-operational staff can be relied on to display care, concern, support and encouragement to prisoners. At the same time, board members have observed, from some members of staff, seeming ambivalence or disregard for the concerns, challenges and hardships facing prisoners in their charge.

Findings from a prisoner focus group, carried out in Portland during the year evidenced that prisoners believed that some staff failed to understand and were unsupportive and dismissive towards prisoners who ask for help. During a forum for self-isolating prisoners in September, prisoners said that officers had suggested that self-harm was an attention-seeking gesture.

In November 2019, a survey of prisoners with mental health issues, carried out in the prison, found that 56% did not feel supported by staff. In a staff survey undertaken in Portland in early 2020, 76% of staff members taking part indicated that they did not feel confident dealing with prisoners who have mental health issues.

DIRF complaints regarding staff attitudes and allegations of racial abuse would also suggest that not all staff are familiar with/observant of equalities legislation and practice.

The need for staff training in working with prisoners who experience these and other protected characteristics have been identified as essential by members of DREAT.

The implementation of the key worker programme has been slow to establish and the deadline to hit targets has been moved throughout the year. Few officers can be assigned the role and delivery relies on Payment Plus, so is carried out in overtime.

The Governor has now indicated that the key worker scheme should be fully operational by January 2021, dependent on staffing levels.

At the time of writing, May 2020, there were 20 key workers who work with 4-5 prisoners each. Vulnerable prisoners, identified from the SIM have been allocated key workers. A further 18 officers are required before there would be sufficient to open up the scheme to all prisoners.

5.4 Equality and diversity

At the beginning of the reporting year the established equalities lead left to take up post elsewhere, and this led to hiatus in the considerable progress he had brought to this important area.

It has taken some time for the new equalities lead to get a grasp of the job and for a period progress slowed. Throughout this year, reporting from forum groups was intermittent. However, there is a sense that things are beginning to pick up momentum once again. Protected strands are represented by officers reporting from prisoner forums. There has been good input from prisoner representatives at the meetings, and efforts have been made to support positive attitudes to diversity by establishing equalities representatives on every wing.

Prisoner forums have identified that there is not a strong cultural mix amongst the staff group in Portland with a lack of black role models within the prison.

On the wings, a breakdown of trusted positions in August and October (during which period white British prisoners comprised around 66% of the population) evidenced that a disproportionate amount of wing cleaner positions went to white British prisoners. On five of the wings, 80% of these jobs went to white/British prisoners. Only one wing, Benbow, evidenced an equal allocation between white British and black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners.

Prison orderly, Listener and peer mentor appointments saw a more proportionate allocation to prisoners from a black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners and those in the 45+ age group have highlighted that getting access to gym and sports facilities are problematic. In September the Race Support Group raised concerns about a lack of gym facilities for some prisoners.

Concern has been raised in DREAT meetings that the current DIRF process is not being used because prisoners are afraid of staff recriminations or fear of losing their jobs. This is supported by Board experience this year, where we have, sometimes, found ourselves to be the first port of call for prisoners expressing anxiety or scepticism about going through the DIRF process.

Prisoners have also raised concerns that DIRFs were not being followed up or were taking a long time to be resolved. One DIRF opened in January 2019 was still ongoing in October. There are also examples of processes taking so long to come to conclusion that prisoners have moved on from Portland, at which time the case would be closed.

More recently there have been attempts to improve on the length of time taken to process DIRFs and the quality of the investigations. In January prisoner representatives at the DREAT meeting said that they could see positive improvements in addressing issues of race and discrimination.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Members of the Chaplaincy team are proactive. They regularly attend ACCT reviews, providing emotional and spiritual support and encouragement to prisoners.

The Chaplaincy team manage the volunteer prison visitors and penfriend schemes. They are also responsible for providing bereavement counselling support.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

There is a general view, frequently voiced by prisoners, that whilst bad behaviour is picked up and punished, good behaviour is not always recognised and rewarded in Portland. Prisoners maintain that this provides little incentive for them to come off the basic or standard incentive and earned privileges (IEP) levels. From observation it is still more usual to find negative behaviour documented in Prison National Offender Management Information System (P-Nomis) entries. This is starting to improve, however, with the influence of key worker entries.

Throughout the year the suggestion of establishing a forum with a multi-ethnic representation to review the IEP regime has been mooted. Consideration of a change to the IEP regime, looking at models in other prisons is ongoing.

5.7 Complaints

The prison has acted to address delays in the processing and investigation of prisoner complaints. This was identified as a problem early in the reporting year and resulted in a number of applications from prisoners to the Board. An improved governance system has now been established addressing both the quality and timeliness of responses.

5.8 Property

Applications from prisoners regarding property that has gone missing during prison transfers or where transfer has brought to light missing property significantly outweigh any other complaints received by the Board.

This year, there were 50, which is an increase on last year's figure. By far the vast majority refer to prisoners transferring in from HMP Bristol.

The fact that this situation has gone on for so long and has been raised by the Board on numerous occasions is a cause of concern and frustration to Board members. The majority of applications go unresolved and have to be passed on to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Physical healthcare

Care UK has been the main provider of health services at the prison since April 2017, subcontracting a range of services. There is an independent health complaints system in place. A monthly health service forum to obtain prisoner feedback was initiated during the reporting period.

A review by an independent doctor of in-possession medication has taken place with a view to prisoners becoming personally responsible for their own medication.

Staff shortages and the high number of prisoners subject to ACCT procedures during the year meant that healthcare staff were not able to attend all reviews. Healthcare staff do now attend segregation reviews, albeit that those attending will sometimes have limited knowledge of the prisoner involved.

The failure of OSGs to deliver healthcare appointment slips to the wing offices resulted in numerous missed appointments during the reporting year: -

- In July, only nine of the 20 prisoners requested for mental health screening attended.
- In September, 205 healthcare appointments were missed at general practitioner, nurse, psychology, dental and hepatology clinics.
- In September, 35 reception screens could not be completed because prisoners were not taken for their part 2 screen.
- During one week in October 77 prisoners failed to attend for appointments.

6.2 Mental healthcare

Care UK delivers an integrated mental health service, including emotional health and well-being, and self-help groups.

Service provision for prisoners experiencing mental health and psychological problems has, however, been affected by difficulties in appointing and retaining suitable qualified staff.

For the majority of the reporting period, the prison did not have a psychiatrist in post. There was also a gap between psychologist appointments.

For much of the year mental health treatment has, again, been based around drug rather than psychosocial support.

The regional safer custody and psychology team has, at times, been called in to provide support and guidance to medical and operational staff dealing with prisoners awaiting section and transfer to mental health hospitals.

The establishment is now fully resourced with mental health and nursing staff, and has a psychiatrist, psychologist and assistant psychologist in post. The latter delivers behavioural therapy in the prison.

6.3 Social care

Prisoners with social care needs are identified and referred to local authority services by health staff in advance of their release. Assessment for social care packages is investigated, and mental health and primary care teams support prisoner transfer and discharge arrangements.

6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

The unlock time for prisoners engaged in activities is about eight hours and 15 minutes per day. For those prisoners not engaged, it can be as little as one hour and 15 minutes.

A reconfiguration of the prison's statistics in December evidenced between 40-50% of prisoners were engaged in activities during the day, which was consistent with figures through the year. The data in December evidenced only 27% of these prisoners were attending education or industries.

The two gyms and the all-weather area provide good facilities for those who manage to sign up for sessions. Prisoner feedback suggests that most do not believe that there is an equality of access to gym sessions.

6.5 Drug rehabilitation

EDP Drug and Alcohol Services provide psychosocial support for prisoners. The team is well led and resourced, and contributes to induction and contact in the first night centre.

Structured one-to-one sessions are supplemented by excellent workbooks and a range of interventions including:

- 10-session self-management and recovery training (SMART)
- Inside Out programme,
- First steps to recovery,
- Reduce the Use programme, and one day workshops,
- Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous.

6.6 Soft. skills

Library provision includes reading materials, distance learning materials and Storybook Dads. It also supports art class sessions.

The Sycamore Tree victim awareness programme has been introduced.

The chaplaincy and library facilitate meetings for the Gypsy and Travellers group. Shannon Trust representatives attend these meetings and provide peer-mentored reading plan resources and training to the prison.

A Gypsy, Romany and Traveller event was held in the Library in July. The primary aim was to promote engagement of this group with education services. The event was well attended, and many signed up for maths and English classes.

Prisoners with drug and alcohol problems and their families can access a designated family service offering a range of support focused on rebuilding healthy relationships. The service is provided by Barnardo's.

The Samaritans provide hands-free telephones on the wings and envelopes, accessible from wing offices, enabling prisoners to write letters to them in confidence.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

In July 2019, the education manager expressed concerns that the extent of the shutdowns and regime slippage in the prison, was having an impact on delivery against contract requirements and learning opportunities for prisoners.

Education data showed that late unlock and delays in getting prisoners to classes regularly resulted in the loss of one hour of activity time in the morning and afternoon sessions. This was having an impact on prisoner learning and motivation, achievement levels and exam success.

Shutdowns resulted in the need to extend courses, and some prisoners found themselves unable to complete and gain qualifications because they were released before their course finished.

Weston College also evidenced the financial implications. In April and May 2019, £344,000 was lost as a consequence of cancellations and regime slippage. For one course, £720 per prisoner had been lost as a result of slippage. There were 22 courses running at the time. These problems continued into the summer, seeing 116.24 hours of teaching time cancelled in August.

Hood building (which houses classrooms set up to deliver computer, music and cookery classes) could increase activity opportunities for a further 40 prisoners. However, as it is the first building to be shut down in response to resourcing problems, it is not used to optimal capacity.

Increased use of the library has been promoted by senior management and library staff throughout the year.

The library is based in Hood Building and to offset the shut-down problems identified above, the librarian has begun to deliver books around the wings.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The prison provides a wide range of work and vocational training opportunities for prisoners. Unfortunately, staffing problems and operational exigencies such as bed

watches and constant watches have put pressure on detailing. This has resulted in frequent re-jigging of the regime, and short notice shut downs and lockdowns.

Backlogs in risk assessments as a consequence of staff shortages also delayed new prisoner access to activities for up to 10 weeks.

Twenty three rota reports during the year raised concerns regarding the full or partial shutdown of activities and regime slippage.

There have been only six prisoners engaged in ROTL during the year. Four prisoners worked in the Jailhouse Café at HMP Verne and two worked in the Portland farm shop.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The majority of prisoners arrive in Portland without an updated offender assessment system (OASys) risk assessment. Prisoners are still being transferred into the establishment with considerably more than 12 months left on their sentence left to serve and outstanding sentence planning targets that they cannot address in the prison.

Prisoners regularly complain about difficulties getting access to their offender supervisor to discuss sentence planning, re-categorisation or resettlement concerns. Offender supervisors, whose caseloads now average around 50, advise that their workloads get in the way of face-to-face contact with prisoners. Key worker interventions have improved this situation as they can act as an intermediary. Unfortunately, restricted detailing of staff to key work and the limited number of prisoners allocated a key worker means that this is not a solution to the problem for all. Applications from prisoners, regarding sentence related issues and difficulties contacting their offender supervisor have increased this year.

Progress has been made in the delivery of accredited offending behaviour programmes. During the year, five Thinking Skills programmes, involving 50 prisoners, have taken place.

There are currently two prisoners at the establishment serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP).

The delivery of a surgery for foreign national prisoners has improved the circumstances for this group of prisoners, who faced problems accessing information on the progress of their case.

7.4 Family contact

Board members have received applications concerning mail and telephone contact with family members. The majority highlighted delays resulting from prison processes.

Investigations evidenced that it can take up to nine days from the time a letter or parcel is received into Portland for it to get to the intended recipient, and vice versa, for mail handed in by prisoners on wings getting to the mail room. Some prisoners maintained that mail sent out never reached its destination.

The Board has also received complaints that photographs have gone missing from letters delivered into Portland, and that mail for a prisoner with protected characteristics was given to the wrong prisoner.

When we looked into these issues it came to light that:

- Some wing staff were simply failing to collect the post from the post room, although they were regularly reminded of the importance of doing so by managers.
- Prisoner mail was being left visible and accessible in unattended wing offices.
- Prisoners told Board members that there were times when they knew that their mail had been on the wing for a while and ready for distribution, but that they were made to wait for it by wing staff. Prisoners saw this behaviour as cruel.
- There was no record of mail being posted out.

The 'email a prisoner' service came on line as this report was being prepared and the Board has already begun to receive applications from prisoners complaining that their pre-paid responses were not getting back to their families in a timely manner. Enquiries with staff in the post room seem to indicate that delays in prisoner responses being taken from the wings to the post room for transmission was at the root of the problem.

Visits: - Barnados has brought about considerable improvements to the visits experience for prisoners and their families. It has introduced a number of initiatives including:

- Seven family days have been organised during school holidays
- Two 'Celebration of Success' award events for prisoners, where family members were invited to attend, have been successful.

The establishment has reduced the number of family visits sessions each week from four to three, two of which take place at weekends. Whilst this reduces the impact on the prison regime and provides increased opportunity for school-aged children to see their father, it reduces the number of face to face contacts that can take place. The maximum number of visitors that can be accommodated is 30 per session.

7.5 Resettlement planning

These services are provided by Catch 22, part of Seetec. The enhanced "through-the-gate" initiative started in April 2019. Staffing levels increased from three to seven at this time.

The main challenge for the team remains accessing accommodation for prisoners on release. Over 50% of prisoners present as being of no fixed abode (NFA) on arrival at the establishment. On release around 14% will report to the local authority for triage as being NFA. This figure has reduced slightly, to 12.6%, with the change in policy allowing Dorset prisoners to be released locally.

The move to release more local prisoners has caused additional pressure because of the lack of accommodation available through local authorities in the area. Night shelter and move-on supported housing are particularly in short supply, and both Bournemouth and Poole local authorities have indicated that there will be no additional investment in the foreseeable future.

The team have had some success in working with independent housing providers.

The contract package release areas to which prisoners leaving Portland return are still very broad, with release across the south of England as well as a small number of prisoners returning to the Midlands and the North. Between January and March 2020 those released to the Devon, Dorset and Cornwall area amounted to only 12.3%. The largest areas for release were Hampshire and Isle of Wight (37%) and Bristol, Gloucester, Somerset, Wiltshire (32%).

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	13
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	5
Total number of visits to the establishment	311
Total number of segregation reviews attended	85

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	12	6
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	2
C	Equality	7	4
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	18	16
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	10	13
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	9	9
F	Food and kitchens	4	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	27	27
H1	Property within this establishment	26	31
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	44	49
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	9	16
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	30	55
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	29	35
K	Transfers	16	19
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	21	20
	Total number of applications	265	303



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