



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Oakwood

For the reporting year

01 April 2019 – 31 March 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 Oakwood opened on the 24th April 2012. It is operated by G4S through a contract with Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS). It had an operational capacity of 1605 until a revamp commenced in July 2016 and by the end of March 2017 it stood at 2106. HMP Oakwood is one of the largest prisons in the country. In 2019/20 there were 2783 admissions and 2782 discharges from the prison. The numbers per month vary from 199 to 261. In addition, at any one time there will be in the region of 182 licence recalls.

All those held are adult male prisoners over the age of 21. Over half are serving sentences in excess of 4 years and approximately 400 more than 10 years. Approximately 150 men are serving indeterminate sentences or life and about 60% at any one time have been identified as representing a serious risk of harm. Approximately 25% are those convicted of sexual offences.

The staffing group is diverse and represents a good mix of ethnic backgrounds.

The prison is a modern facility, which is well maintained, clean and tidy. This is enhanced by the flower beds in the general areas and on some house blocks, which have been created and cared for by prisoners. Douglas, the Lifers wing, grows vegetables for their own consumption and sends surplus to other wings. They also provide vegetables for the Plot-to-Plate initiative, which supports prisoners cooking for relatives during visits.

A Controller, Deputy Controller and Assistant Controller from HMPPS are based within the prison and are active in the control and management of the contract between HMPPS and G4S.

The prison is a Category C training designated resettlement prison located near to Wolverhampton. The key providers to the prison include:

- CARE UK – (Healthcare)
- GEOAmev (transport to and from other prisons and the courts)
- DHL (ordering and delivery of canteen items)
- Aramark (catering services)
- Novus (education provider) replaced Milton Keynes College from the 1st April 2019. Novus was commissioned by HMPPS to provide education.
- Staffordshire Library Services
- Lloyds Pharmacy Services
- Staffordshire County Council (social work and care support)

Further support is also provided by a range of voluntary organisations.

There are some 20 prisoner-led groups providing regular help and support to prisoners throughout the prison. Most are now well-established and utilise the skills, experiences and self-motivation of the prisoners. The Senior Management Team (SMT) is commended for its encouragement for, and unstinting support of, these groups.

The prison has the following accommodation units:

Ash: (vulnerable prisoners) currently accommodates 661 prisoners on 8 wings. The eldest prisoner is 89 years of age with 17% of prisoners over the age of 50 and the disabilities on the house block range from mental illness, visual/hearing impairment to age-related illnesses, including dementia. Ash A Uppers is a supported living wing, B Uppers is also a supported living wing but with a minimum age of 50 years. A Lowers is an enhanced wing and D Lowers is a long term/lifers wing. D Uppers is an induction wing.

Beech: (mainstream prisoners) accommodates 637 prisoners on 8 wings. This includes a specialist lifers' wing, a family wing and Willow Unit – Willow was established in 2017 to help to meet the needs of a group of prisoners who would benefit from additional support and have shown that they are unable to meet HMP Oakwood's expectations and/or have become disengaged from the regime.

Cedar: (mainstream prisoners) accommodates 641 prisoners on 8 wings. This includes long term/lifers wing housing 64 long-term prisoners including 12 lifers and 3 veterans and Chestnut, which is a basic wing for prisoners who have difficulty engaging and need ongoing support.

Douglas: (lifers and indeterminate prisoners) accommodates 87 prisoners on 2 wings.

Elm: (Drug Recovery Unit [DRU]) accommodates 80 prisoners housed on 2 wings.

CSU: has 26 standard cells, including 2 cells providing special accommodation and a constant watch cell.

Cells in the main house blocks are equipped with a WC, shower, wash basin and telephone (restricted through a prisoner telephone PIN system), bed and storage. Healthy Living Wings were available on each of the main house blocks apart from Cedar during the reporting year. Ash and Beech have their own induction wings.

Several cells have been adapted for wheelchair use and for the use of Listeners on each house block. Each house block has an education block and a hub for medical staff, to reduce mass movements of prisoners.

3. Executive summary

The Board has no major concerns with regards to the management of HMP Oakwood. The prisoners have a wide range of activities and support whilst they are resident and a number of initiatives that enables them to move on once released. In particular, the Board would like to highlight the following:

- The collaborative approach between SMT and staff to ensure that the best care and support is available for prisoners
- The extensive range of peer-led initiatives
- The willingness of the SMT to encourage new ideas and initiatives from all sectors of the prison community
- The range and quality of the family support work
- The Visitors' Hub (Section 7)
- The Patient Led Experience of Care UK (Section 7)

Our main area of concern is the Novus contract. The Board feels that the SMT of HMP Oakwood has done all they can to ensure that effective educational services are provided. The prisoners are yet to receive the quality and quantity of educational provision that they are entitled to.

3.1 Background to the report

The template for the 2019/20 Annual Report (AR) and the accompanying guidelines were received during week ending the 6th March 2020. On the 12th March 2020, the Board decided that it would visit HMP Oakwood and, thereafter, monitor the prison remotely due to the COVID-19 situation.

The monitoring by board members, that took place between the 1st April 2019 and the 12th March 2020, was specifically planned to utilise the monitoring guidance for the 2018/19 AR. Consequently, in completing this report, the Board did not have knowledge of the change of format for last year's AR or the monitoring guidance and toolkits that are currently being developed for the evidence sections.

The Board has completed this report, to the best of its ability, using and interpreting appropriate quantitative and qualitative data accrued throughout the previous 11 months. The completion of the report has been additionally challenged due to the Board's absence from the prison since the 12th of March. The Chair and Vice Chair have only had limited access from 14th May to the IMB office within the prison.

The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to gather information and discuss the contents of this annual report. The Board has therefore tried to cover as much ground as it can in these difficult circumstances, but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints. Regular information is being collected specifically on the prison's response to the pandemic, and that is being collated nationally.

The Board is appreciative of the Director, Controller and their staff for their support and encouragement to enable the Board to maintain its monitoring role during the pandemic.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The Board is of the opinion that on the whole prisoners are safe. The development of the Key Worker Scheme has helped to personalise contact between prisoners and prison staff. Many of the peer-led initiatives enable peer-to-peer support and interventions.

The Safer Custody Team has a wide range of monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that any problems in relation to the security and safety of the prison can be dealt with promptly.

The combined number of assaults including serious assaults, assaults against prisoners, assaults against staff and fights amounted to 415. This equated to a low of 1.18% of the population in April 2019 and 2.22% in August 2019.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The Board is of the opinion that prisoners are treated humanely and fairly. Religious and cultural beliefs are respected, with participation in cultural and educational activities actively encouraged. Prisoners are required, wherever possible, to undertake meaningful remunerated employment enabling them to contribute to their own financial support.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

The Board is of the view that the healthcare provision for the prison population is at least equivalent to that offered in the community and sometimes better. Prisoners are encouraged and supported, by peer-led support groups, to optimise their health and well-being. There have been some issues raised by the Prisons & Probation Ombudsman (PPO) during the course of the year, which are being monitored and progressed.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The Board is of the opinion that prisoners are, in the main, well prepared for release. The Resettlement Team provide support via different interventions, addressing practical issues such as employment, housing, finance, health, debt and substance misuse. Up to March 2019, excellent support in the field of education was provided by Milton Keynes College. However, with the change of education provision to Novus, the Board has had concerns about the range of courses provided, together with the experience and continuity of teaching staff.

3.3 Main areas for development for 2019/20

TO HMPPS

Throughout the year, the Board has expressed concern about the disproportionate number of property applications from prisoners who claim that all, or some, of their property has not been received from the transferring prisons. Many of the complaints relate to 2 prisons in particular, HMP Hewell and HMP Birmingham.

The Board commented in last year's report, about its concerns relating to the management, accountability and transfer of property across the prison estate and little seems to have been done at a national level to improve on this.

The Board considers that the change of education provider to Novus in April 2019 has resulted in a number of significant and challenging staffing issues, which have impacted detrimentally on the quality and quantity of staffing and education provision. Poor staff retention and recruitment and increased sickness levels have resulted in non-delivery of new courses that were stated on the Annual Delivery Plan provided by Novus.

The Board considers that the quality and quantity of the education provision has fallen sharply since its last annual report and that the delivery plan commitments made by Novus have not been achieved.

TO THE DIRECTOR

The Prison's drug and alcohol strategy was revised in April 2019. The strategy is detailed and comprehensive and its implementation is supported by a monthly drug strategy meeting.

However, a number of matters remain unclear to the IMB at the present time:

- Has a local protocol been agreed with the Police regarding local Police response times and how they are monitored?
- Has the Security Department developed a protocol with the local Probation Office regarding former prisoners' visiting HMP Oakwood?
- Has representation on the local Criminal Justice Board been achieved?
- Will CCTV be further improved in the Visits area?
- Have links been made with the local community /Neighbourhood Watch Group?
- Has guidance been produced for staff on the preservation of evidence?
- How is the protocol in relation to visit interceptions monitored?

The Director should ensure that the recommendations made by Instructors relating to the use of force are fully implemented.

The Director should consider a request to HMPPS for upgrade of the shower and toilet facilities and an upgrade of the shower curtains and fittings in the cells.

Following concerns expressed in last year's AR, the Director should consider again, how to ensure that staff enforce the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across all houseblocks and ensure the regular availability of appropriate cleaning materials so that the serveries are maintained to a more consistent standard of hygiene and cleanliness.

The Director and Head of Healthcare should review the positioning of the health complaints boxes to ensure better access to them by prisoners.

A small number of new arrivals have complained they have been left without their medication on their first night and sometimes longer because the sending prison did not send medication. At the prison an appropriate system and subsequent follow up should be put in place to ensure that this does not happen.

Whilst staff follow the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) guidelines on medicine management at the medicine hatches, there should also be an officer managing those prisoners queuing for their medication. The Board is concerned that over the year IMB members have observed occasions when officers have not been present to supervise the prisoners. The Director should ensure that officers are present at the medicine hatches during the dispensing of medication.

The issue of missing property during transfers to and from the prison is still a concern to the Board. New arrivals have also commented that the delay in checking telephone numbers before a prisoner is allowed to call his family can often take days and sometimes longer, resulting in families not being informed of the move. The Director should ensure that all instances of missing property are quickly followed up and that the checking of phone numbers is done as soon as possible.

3.4 Progress since the last report 2018/19

TO THE MINISTER

The Board feels that there should be a national Ministry of Justice directive in relation to the management, accountability and transfer of property across the prison estate. The problem that needs addressing urgently is the transportation of prisoners' property between establishments. Present rules state that a prisoner is allowed 3 bags weighing not more than 15kg each (which is equivalent to 2 of the regulation volumetric boxes) and 1 oversized electrical item, plus unlimited legal paperwork. There is a lack of suitable storage space on the transporting vehicles to accommodate the current allowance of property transferring with the prisoner, which results in property being sent separately. Frequently property is lost, resulting in distress to prisoners and numerous claims for compensation.

The Minister sent a letter in January 2020 thanking the Board for all the hard work that had been put into capturing our observations, especially as the Board was short of members during the reporting year.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

There were no recommendations under this heading last year

TO THE DIRECTOR

- Is it possible for the regime to be changed to ensure that prisoners attending visits are still able to collect their medication when they return to their house blocks?

Healthcare dispensing times are clearly advertised throughout the establishment and forms part of patients' inductions; hence patients will be aware of this. We are happy to discuss/review the regime with G4S as part of the scheduled bi-monthly Local Delivery Board

- The Board is concerned that Healthcare Managers have withdrawn the services of a nurse previously based in the Care & Separation Unit (CSU). Whilst nurses attend reviews, on occasions they are considerably late and sometimes unprepared in relation to healthcare needs of the prisoner and this means the review is not always as robust as it should be. Can this be reviewed?

Nurses in CSU have never been withdrawn by the Healthcare Managers. The requirement is to provide dispensing of medications on CSU. This can be delivered by a registered nurse or a registered Pharmacy Technician. A nurse or Pharmacy Technician plus a second checker (this can be a Pharmacy Assistant or Healthcare Assistant) is allocated to the CSU and Douglas on a daily basis as part of the off duty/staff allocations. There is cover provided 7 days per week in CSU in addition to the nurse attending Good Order Reviews (this is generally a mental health nurse). We make every attempt to ensure CSU duties are covered. The CSU staff are aware to contact the nurse in charge if there are any delays.

As a company, Care UK recognises the skills of those professionals we employ; hence this is why Pharmacy Technicians now complete medication rounds. Every attempt is made to ensure a member of Healthcare staff is present at the Good Order Reviews, though on some occasions there are other tasks that will take clinical priority.

- There are continuing problems with prisoners not wearing the correct clothing in the serveries and the cleanliness of equipment. What can be done to ensure consistent compliance with the Director's directives governing the availability and wearing of appropriate clothing?

The servery workers have all been issued with the correct PPE on all house blocks and this does not appear to be such an issue anymore. A stock is kept on each house block in order to replace any missing items.

- With regard to the maintenance of kitchen equipment and the hygiene issues arising from the blockage of the drains, what can the Director do to resolve these issues and raise the health and safety standards accordingly?

All kitchen drains are clear of any blockages and foul smell cowls have been refitted.

- The Board is concerned about the follow up arrangements for recommendations that the PPO has made over the year in relation to health and referrals to secondary services and those made by consultants in relation to prisoners' healthcare needs. What can be done to implement the recommendations and/or improve good practice in this area?

HMP Oakwood is currently allocated 8 external secondary services appointments per day, due to Oakwood's large population and complex patients. The numbers of hospital referrals we receive outweigh what can be facilitated.

Oakwood's Advanced Nurse Practitioners review which patients are scheduled to attend the following week and decide who attends on a clinical needs basis. This is reviewed by the Head of Healthcare in her absence.

The Head of Healthcare is currently working with NHS England due to the increased number of 18-week Rapid Transformational Therapy (RTT) breaches, initiatives have been introduced, such as:

- Mobile MRI screening into the establishment – this has proved to be successful in the past with the last MRI screening over 33 patients on site.
 - 2nd Telemedicine cart for the vulnerable prisoner population to increase clinical utilisation. This was commissioned and has been in operation on Ash for some time.
 - The above initiatives will be reviewed periodically with NHS England.
 - The above concern is on our risk register, we have had assurance from NHS England from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) that this is equitable to the community.
- The wages paid to prisoners undertaking vocational courses is less than working in Industries. This can make a difference to prisoners when choosing a course, as income can be an issue. Can the current employment band and rates be rationalised, simplified and made clearer for prisoners?

A recent review has taken place of the wages for education courses to be increased in line with other areas of work. Unfortunately, this is not feasible as we currently exceed our residents' wage budget. We do match wages for residents completing functional skills qualifications (English and Maths), as we mandate working towards Level 2. Therefore, there is no impact on resident wages for these courses, if they earned more than education wages in their previous employment.

- There appears to be a lack of internal evaluation showing the outcomes and benefits of the training provided by Education. It is the Board's view that the training strategy should include both performance information and outcomes to ensure that the training provided meets the needs of prisoners to enable them to enter the needs of the world of work and can also be evaluated accordingly.

The data was monitored monthly in reference to the outcomes for learners whilst at Oakwood. With the introduction of the new Prison Education Framework (PEF) contract and new provider Novus, we are currently unable to do this effectively as a new reporting system introduced by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) as part of this contract is still being developed fully. Input has commenced and Novus is currently undertaking a data cleanse of their data reports and systems in order for us to have more accurate information.

The courses offered are reviewed and changed in line with the Oakwood Annual Delivery Plan, which factors Local Market Index (LMI) data, employer

needs, residents' needs and levels for progression. This has changed and increased annually.

- A number of prisoners on some education courses have in excess of 12 months of their sentence left to serve. Consideration should be given to the timing and allocation of appropriate courses for prisoners to ensure that they are delivered at an appropriate time within their sentence plan. Can the allocation and timing of appropriate courses be reviewed?

Course allocation is reviewed on an individual basis and this differs depending on the course. A number of courses can be delivered and are beneficial to residents throughout their sentence, for example, Oakwood's curriculum incorporates courses which will also benefit residents whilst in custody e.g. Mentoring, English, Maths and Mindset.

The allocation of vocational training courses has to consider factors such as:

- Residents can go to a 'D' Category establishment with 24 months left to serve but are often not able to complete the range of vocational training courses offered at Oakwood. 'D' Category establishments usually have very little vocational training available, if any.
- The completion of a vocational training course prior to going to a 'D' Category establishment can increase the opportunities to gain a meaningful Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and work.
- Lifers and Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence residents would not be given these opportunities if we only offered these courses to residents with a limited time prior to release.
- Direct employment linked courses, e.g. Railtrack, are only offered to residents within their last 6 months of their sentence.

Areas the Board highlighted for monitoring in 2018/19 from external bodies:

- Monitoring of the implementation of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Inspection Report following the inspection, which took place from 26th February – 9th March 2018.
- The PPO recommendations over the last year have raised issues relating to risk assessments, the opening of cells for welfare checks and monitoring during the night.
- Recommendations made by the Coroner from inquests held throughout the year.

The Board has proactively monitored all of the above during the year and is pleased to report that improvements have been made.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

In 2019/20 there were 2783 prisoners admitted to the prison and 2782 discharged in the same period.

The prison's reception and induction procedures aim to provide a warm and positive experience for new arrivals. The Admissions area is modern, spacious and calming with background music. Experienced staff, with prisoner orderlies on hand to assist in the registration process, support an effective and efficient reception into Oakwood.

Opportunity is given to all new admissions to surrender contraband without penalty and a new body scanner, which was installed in November 2019 (1 of only 10 in the country), ensures thorough body screening takes place for transfers in and out of the prison. Early identification of vulnerability and risk issues for each new prisoner is carried out, including cell sharing assessments. Individual healthcare assessments are undertaken to ensure new or on-going medical needs are identified so that appropriate health care can be arranged. However, some new admissions have complained they have been left without their medication on their first night and sometimes longer. A better system needs to be in place to prevent this.

New prisoners to Oakwood are complimentary of the prison's well-planned and comprehensive 2 week induction programme, which is delivered on induction wings and ensures they are well informed of how the prison operates and what is expected of them. Education diagnostic assessments are undertaken to establish new prisoners' current English, Maths and Information Technology skills so that subsequent education and training opportunities are appropriate and relevant to their individual needs.

The conversion of shower rooms to interview rooms has taken place and the possibility of computer systems being available to record information on prisoner records immediately is being considered.

The Board is of the opinion that the prison's reception and induction processes are delivered professionally, effectively and comprehensively.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

In 2018 and 2019 respectively there were 692 and 783 Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened.

By way of example, 53 new ACCTs were opened across the prison for the month of November 2019, 38 were opened following instances of self-harm, 4 were opened following threats of self-harm, 3 for alleged overdoses, 4 for low mood, 1 for mental health concerns and 3 for suicidal thoughts. The only houseblocks that did not have prisoners on an ACCT during this period were Douglas and Elm. The house block with the highest number of ACCTs was Ash. In the same month there were 38 trained ACCT Assessors and 71 Case Managers. Further ACCT Assessors and Case Managers were to be trained in 2020 (subsequently affected by COVID-19).

There were 32 fully trained and active Listeners. Further training for new Listeners was planned for 2020 by the Samaritans (subsequently affected by COVID-19)

The number of self-harm incidents for 2018 was 871, involving 473 individual prisoners. In 2019, the figure was 1176, involving 558 individual prisoners. The Board has not had the opportunity to explore the reasons for this increase.

During the reporting year there have been a total of 6 deaths of prisoners whilst in custody at the prison. Coroner's inquests have not yet taken place for these 6 prisoners.

During the previous reporting year there were 6 deaths which were awaiting a Coroner's inquest and these have now been held. The verdict on all of these prisoners was death by natural causes. A member of the Board has attended all of the inquests. The PPO made recommendations in 2 of their investigations into the deaths; these recommendations referred to transfer of medication, delay in receiving medication and delay in receiving information from the community and from the transferring prison. The prison and Healthcare staff should be commended for the standard of end of life care they provide to prisoners. It is dealt with sensitively, taking the needs and wishes of the prisoner into account, allowing some very elderly prisoners to die in the company of their friends and people they know.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

For the year 2018 - 2019 there were the following number of incidents of violence:

Serious Assaults	Assaults on prisoners	Assaults on staff	Fights
95	175	110	129

Over the reporting period the total number of assaults including serious assaults, assaults against prisoners, assaults against staff and fights was 415. This amounted to a high of 2.22% of the prison population in August 2019 and a low of 1.02% in September 2019.

Challenge, Support and Intervention Plans (CSIP) are in place at the prison and were signed off at Stage 3 by the Regional Safety Team Leads. In November 2019 it was reported that 66 CSIPs were considered. 21 were opened, with 3 prisoners being transferred in from other establishments on open CSIPs. In November for example, CSIPs were opened with bullying, assaults and fights being the main issues.

All violent incidents are the subject of a joint Residential and Safer Custody Management investigation. In addition, violence reduction statistics are presented at weekly performance and stability meetings, which a Board member periodically attends.

The prison's response to violent perpetrators over an 8-month period in 2019 was consistent with the majority being downgraded to basic and placed on report and a small percentage being referred to the Police.

All serious incidents are reported to the Board on the same day and the Command Suite has been opened on 6 occasions. During the COVID-19 shutdown period the Command Suite has been opened so far for 2 serious incidents, with the Board Chair being kept informed throughout.

In January 2020, the update to the CCTV system commenced throughout the prison, replacing the existing equipment that was installed when Oakwood was opened in 2012.

One live hostage contingency planning training event took place in August 2019 and was attended by the Vice Chair.

During August 2019 an additional 60 body worn video cameras were acquired to ensure that all operational staff were equipped. It is of some concern that the Duty Director's reports indicate that the cameras are not always being used. This is an area that the Board will be monitoring in the current reporting period.

4.4 Vulnerable prisoners and safeguarding

Ash houseblock houses the majority of the vulnerable prisoners in HMP Oakwood.

At the end of November 2019 there were 603 men on Ash, 29% of which identified themselves as having a disability. Some declared more than one disability, resulting in a total of 944 in the same month. Of this figure 201 reported a mental illness, 118 reduced mobility and 135 learning difficulties. A full equality induction is completed in Admissions/wing induction

In November 2019 18% of the prison population were aged over 50 and 56 were over the age of 70. There is always a group of men who are retired due to age, medical or both and this represents a relatively small number of the prison population.

Prisoners who are elderly, disabled or who have reduced mobility can work on Ash. This encourages independence and gives them confidence to leave their cells and work with others on the wing.

Men who are medically unfit to go to workshops or education can do in-cell work as a way of encouraging and supporting any prisoner who needs a safeguarding measure, to enable them to earn income and be independent. All prisoners doing in-cell work due to mental health or physical incapacities have been signed off by the prison GP and work with a mental health worker. All prisoners over the age of 65 are unlocked during the core day and they are not required to pay a rental fee for a TV.

Prisoners with complex health needs are discussed at a multi professional complex case clinic to ensure the appropriate level of care is put in place. The majority of prisoners discussed are housed on Ash.

4.5 Use of force

An unannounced inspection of the prison by HMIP, covering the period 26th February to the 9th March 2018 commented that the level of use of force had increased substantially and was very high compared to other comparator prisons. A recommendation was made that incidents of use of force should be monitored. There is a well-defined process now in place to monitor the use of force on a quarterly basis and the Board periodically attends this meeting.

The Board is aware of an annual decline in the use of force between 2017 and 2019. The use of force total for 2019 indicates a reduction of 49% over the 2-year period.

However, in the first 3 months of 2020 there were a total of 142 incidents of use of force; this compares to 122 in 2019 and 206 in 2018. The Board will continue to monitor this closely during the current year.

The age breakdown involved in the use of force for the same period was primarily in the 21 - 35 age bracket, with the largest number in the 26 - 30 group. For this period 48% of incidents involved control and restraint, 15% involved guide and hold, 21% had ratchet cuffs applied and 16% involved personal safety. The majority of the incidents took place on Beech house block and Chestnut Unit on Cedar house block. Ash and Willow Wing on Beech house block also saw an increase in the incidents of use of force.

Instructors have fed back to staff the following regarding the use of force:

- At the end of any incident where force has been used the camera should continue to be used to include the debrief
- Body worn cameras are to be activated at the earliest opportunity when dealing with non-compliant /aggressive behaviour to help prevent it from escalating into an incident
- After each incident a person unconnected with the use of force should meet with the prisoner and briefly review the circumstances which led to force being used.

PAVA spray is not used in the prison.

During the reporting period, the Command Suite was opened for 6 serious incidents, 5 of which were attended by the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG).

During August 2019 an additional 60 extra body worn video cameras were acquired to ensure that all operational staff had access to the necessary equipment.

4.6 Substance misuse

Elm is a dedicated Drug Recovery Unit, having a maximum of 80 prisoners who participate in a 16-week course. During the reporting period, 75% of prisoners successfully completed the course. Many of the prisoners were subsequently released back into the community drug free at the end of their custodial period. As part of the programme staff arrange for external inspirational speakers to visit and to

share their experiences of prison life, explaining how they turned their lives around to become drug free.

During December 2019 Care U.K. staff commenced training initially with gym staff in connection with Prenoxad, which can be administered for anyone having a drug induced seizure. Training for more staff continued into 2020.

In January 2020 regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings were introduced, followed in February with weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

In the prison there are several initiatives to combat the use of illicit substances. The Recovery Champions programme is a peer-led initiative whereby assistance is given to those who wish to be drug free. In December 2019 the team completed their first 12 months in operation, with 13000 appointments taking place.

The prison's drug and alcohol strategy was revised in April 2019. The strategy is detailed and comprehensive and its implementation is supported by a monthly Drug Strategy meeting.

However, a number of matters remain unclear at the present time:

- Has a local protocol been agreed with the Police regarding local Police response times and how they are monitored?
- Has the Security Department developed a protocol with the local Probation Office regarding former prisoners' visiting HMP Oakwood?
- Has representation on the local Criminal Justice Board been achieved?
- Will CCTV be further improved in the Visits area?
- Have links been made with the local community /Neighbourhood Watch Group?
- Has guidance been produced for staff on the preservation of evidence?
- How is the protocol in relation to visit interceptions monitored?

The drug and alcohol strategy refers to the production of a Drugs Awareness Package, which is delivered to prisoners on a one-to-one basis. Workbooks have been produced relating to individual substances that prisoners can work through. Whilst these books are excellent, prisoners whose first language is not English or who cannot read, are unable to use them unless they work with the Substance Misuse Team. The books can be translated by the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust, if required.

The continued use of the Rapiscan wand uncovered several incoming letters that allegedly contained quantities of drug impregnated paper.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The standard of cleanliness throughout the prison is generally, good. There are teams of orderlies continuously employed on a cycle of cleaning of the wings and stairwells, using mechanical cleaning equipment. Litter on the stairwells can be a problem.

The wings are usually respected by prisoners in terms of tidiness, although the areas around toasters and food preparation areas require constant monitoring. The landings can be cluttered with damp washing due to broken tumble dryers. The laundry workers however, do take pride in keeping the washing and drying areas clean and tidy.

There has been a constant breakdown of washers and dryers throughout the year, mainly due to the age of the equipment and improper use. Many of the old and damaged washing machines and tumble dryers have now been replaced.

Cleaning standards, particularly in the double cells, can be variable. The volume of personal property that many prisoners have means that double cells are invariably cluttered, making regular cleaning a challenge. Showers and toilets in cells have been in constant use since the prison opened and are beginning to look tired and are increasingly difficult to keep clean and hygienic. The adequacy of shower curtains can be a concern, particularly the fittings of the curtains.

The provision of special equipment for prisoners with back and joint complaints is variable, with medical recommendations required.

The serveries on the wings are a challenge in maintaining good hygiene. With the exception of Ash, the remaining houseblocks often struggle with cleaning standards. The Board has noted on a number of occasions that the serveries are not consistently clean and well cared for, with some equipment not working for several weeks with work surfaces and food trolleys not always cleaned as they should be. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for prisoners in the serveries has continued to be a problem throughout the reporting year, with some prisoners continuing to wear inappropriate attire that does not meet health and safety standards.

Prisoners comment that certain cleaning materials are kept locked in the offices and cannot always be accessed because a member of staff is not available.

The cleaning standards in the main kitchens are generally good. Over 4000 meals are prepared daily. Food preparation time is busy and time constrained. Water and food spillages can be a health and safety concern at busy times.

In the kitchens there has been a problem with the drains that runs through the area, which were blocked for several weeks.

Food quality is good with only 12 and 13 complaints respectively, to the Board over the last 2 years. Most prisoners comment that the quantity and variety of food provided is adequate. A wide range of special diets are catered for, requiring recommendation from the appropriate Chaplain or Healthcare professional. Aramark, the catering providers, should be congratulated on the provision of hot meals, not only throughout the year but also in respect of the range of special diets it

provides. Aramark has performed very well during the COVID-19 pandemic and also the recent period of Ramadan.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

The prison's CSU is a self-contained block with 26 standard cells, 2 cells providing special accommodation and a constant watch cell. The CSU is a clean and well-maintained unit.

The CSU is well managed at Front Line Manager (FLM) and SMT level. Their experience and supportive approach to both prisoners and staff, encourages a professional and supportive environment for prisoners.

There is an established regime in place throughout the day, which is supported by prisoner orderlies. The regime includes the daily use of a secure outdoor gym facility and timed telephone calls. An orderly/staff member undertakes a range of activities with the prisoners, including individual fitness sessions and recreational activities in an indoor activities room. A Duty Director (DD) visits daily, to speak with each prisoner and Chaplains visit on a regular basis.

Security, whilst firmly managed in the CSU, is generally enforced with appropriate respect for the prisoners and their property.

Occupancy levels of CSU vary with the time spent there being carefully monitored. The Board receives daily information giving details of individual interventions, exit plans and the number of days spent in CSU, including those prisoners who have exceeded 42 days, which is then followed up. The SMT and DDs are proactive in ensuring that prisoners, where appropriate, are returned to the house blocks, taking into account safety and security issues for both the prison and prisoner. Where a return to a houseblock is inappropriate, transfers out are proactively sought.

The Board is informed of all incidents in the prison via the daily DD's report. Serious incident reports are communicated by email. All relocations to the CSU are notified to the Board. A Board member will visit a new arrival within the first 72 hours (usually within 24 hours) to speak with the prisoner, check on welfare and the completion of the relevant paperwork authorising the relocation to the CSU. Board visits take place weekly and are recorded. ACCT documentation is checked and followed up accordingly.

The Board attends Good Order Reviews, which take place 3 times a week. The quality of the review process is high. Prisoners are invariably treated with respect and are dealt with professionally. Reviews are chaired by the appropriate senior level of staffing and attended by the FLM, a healthcare nurse and other members of staff as appropriate. It is a concern that on occasions, agency nurses are in attendance who do not always appear to have the necessary awareness of the complex needs of the prisoner.

Prisoners who have stayed on the unit for more than 28 days have care plans in place; there is evidence of regular visits from mental health and substance misuse staff, who provide additional support and advice to staff in the CSU as well as to the prisoners.

The CSU facilitates access to Listeners and other prisoner-led support groups whenever appropriate.

The Board receive very few applications from prisoners while residing in the CSU, despite the fact that application forms are readily available.

During the COVID-19 outbreak the Board has written to prisoners being transferred to the CSU, advising them that they are not able to visit but giving details of how to contact them if required.

5.3 Staff-prisoner/detainee relationships, key workers

The prison has 544 members of staff across all disciplines and the current turnover rate is 1.10%.

The Training Team provided 71 members of staff with 3rd party induction training between January 2019 and November 2019. In January and February 2020, 22 new members of staff received training. The training attended by the Board was informative and well received by those attending. In addition, the Board is invited to give input to the training of new cohorts of staff about its role within the prison.

The number of officers recruited during 2019 was 82.

The relationship between most members of staff and prisoners is excellent and support is available for staff who have been involved in any serious assaults or incidents. A number of staff have gone above and beyond their remit when dealing with the care of the dying and this is to be commended. In addition, staff take a pride in the work they do and take steps to promote this. Good examples include the work done on the DRU and the Family Support service.

Beech and Cedar houseblocks introduced a monthly report called Take Pride in your Stride, which highlights the positive work that is taking place during the month by members of staff.

There have been no incidents of prosecutions of staff members during the reporting year.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak the introduction of the Key Worker Scheme was progressing well, with 89% of prisoners having a Key Worker on the 24th March 2020. Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, a new cohort of trained staff will allow 96.3% of prisoners to have a Key Worker. The Key Worker Scheme is part of the "Business as Usual at HMP Oakwood" and the information about the scheme is given to all officers as part of their training. The general feedback is that staff welcome key working as part of their role and they enjoy the interaction and time spent with prisoners. There have been no adverse comments from prisoners to the Board since the introduction of the scheme. The prison had an audit in November 2019 when it was reported that key working was well embedded but did not result in a recommended sign-off to the OMiC Board and a re-visit will be required to ensure that the contact with Key Workers is at the required level.

5.4 Equality and diversity

An Equality Newsletter is published bi-monthly and is sent to all houseblocks, providing information regarding equality events and meetings. There have been a number of events organised during the reporting year, including those that are age-

appropriate, violence reduction related and to celebrate Black History Month. These have been organised by an officer and supported by a committee of prisoners and they are to be congratulated on the work undertaken.

Protective Characteristics Meetings are held bi-monthly and the Board attends periodically.

In November 2019 there were 136 Foreign National prisoners resident in the prison. The SMT work closely with HMP Huntercombe to transfer these men to a Foreign National prison, as appropriate. There are 2 Foreign National prisoner representatives employed by the prison.

The Home Office Immigration Enforcement facilitates monthly surgeries to deal with queries. The Your Consultation Group (YCG) continues to offer support to the foreign national prisoners and they have developed contacts with the Ministry of Justice, to clarify difficulties with interpretation of Prison Service Orders/Prison Service Instructions.

There are approximately 68 prisoners who have previously been employed in HM Forces. There are Veterans in Custody prisoner representatives who meet with new prisoners on arrival, to sign post them to appropriate peer group support.

There is support for transgender prisoners and Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgender (LGBT) group work takes place.

The prison has trained Total Voice advocates who can attend meetings to represent a prisoner on issues including assessments, hearings and appointments. They work in conjunction with the social work team for the prison.

There is an equality newsletter published bi-monthly.

There are protective characteristic meetings, held bi-monthly, which are supported by the Equality Team.

From January to December 2019 there were 109 Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRF) submitted and for the period January to March 2020 there were 30 DIRFs submitted. This has been an increase; in 2018 63 had been submitted and for January to March 2019 there were 19 submitted. The main trend in 2019 was race-related matters. This is an area that the Board will monitor in the current reporting year.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

There are representatives of 12 different faiths, either based in the prison or who visit when required. Information about services and support is placed on the visitor kiosk noticeboard. The Chaplaincy Department has links with a range of community groups and volunteers who either come into the prison or support from a distance.

The Chaplaincy has provided support for prisoners who are recently bereaved and who are unable to attend funerals or visit relatives with a serious illness. This can be

carried out by video link, if appropriate. This service has been enhanced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

The Board has been unable to obtain any statistical information in relation to the IEP scheme. This is an area that the Board will explore further during the current reporting year.

5.7 Complaints

The prison has a detailed complaints procedure, which is supported by a number of initiatives to deal with complaints and concerns in a timely manner e.g. Communication, Information, Co-operation and Support (CICS) representatives (a peer led group). Some complaints are deemed to be applications and are not taken through the complaints system but nevertheless they do receive a timely response from the relevant department.

For the 3 months January to March 2019 there were 698 complaints and in the same period for 2020 there were 572. The areas about which most complaints have been received are OMU, Finance, Property, Food, Residential and Visits. The houseblocks that most complaints are received from are Beech and Cedar and the reasons for these complaints are Residential issues, re-categorisation and staff-related issues. In the early part of 2020 there were 6 identified persistent complainants with at least 1 of these also submitting applications on a prolific basis to the Board.

The Board had commenced a deep dive review of complaints prior to lock down, to look at the quality of the responses given but this piece of work had not been completed and will form part of the monitoring for 2020/21.

5.8 Property

It is pleasing to report that there has been a 65% reduction in the number of applications received by the Board relating to property issues within the prison. There were 20 applications during the current reporting year, compared with 33 the previous year. Applications regarding property lost during transfer or at another establishment, reduced by 9% to 71 applications compared to 78 the previous year.

The Admissions area is well laid out and effectively managed, to minimise errors in the booking in and out of property. There is a team of experienced and trained prisoner orderlies who assist with the booking in and out of prisoners' property. Prisoners observe as their property is recorded and stored away or forwarded to the receiving houseblock and cell. Stored property is securely bagged and stored in the Admissions block.

Throughout the year the Board has expressed concern about the disproportionate number of property applications from prisoners who claim that all or some of their property has not been received from the transferring prisons. Many of the complaints relate to 2 prisons, in particular HMP Hewell and HMP Birmingham. It is sending prison's responsibility to deal with compensation claims regarding missing property on transfer.

Property complaints within the prison are relatively low per head of population. Prisoners are able to lock their own cells. Problems appear to arise when prisoners share a cell. Officers endeavour to secure the prisoner's property at the earliest opportunity but this is not always possible and ownership of property has to be confirmed.

Missing property, particularly loss of personal and confidential items such as letters, photos and legal papers can be traumatic to prisoners. In general staff are sensitive to such concerns and this is reflected in the relatively low number of applications received.

6. Health and wellbeing

Health care general

Health care is provided by Care UK. The last Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection was in February 2018 and there were no recommendations or rating.

The Board has recently been invited to attend the Local Delivery Board for Health and one meeting was attended before the COVID-19 lockdown.

There is in-patient provision at the prison, which has not been commissioned since the prison has been opened. However, the Board was pleased to see that temporary permission has been given to open the provision, known as Hazel Unit, and bring it into use to care for vulnerable prisoners during the COVID pandemic.

6.1 Physical healthcare

The total staffing compliment is currently 42.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff in post with 6.3 FTE currently in the vetting process. There are 1.4 members of staff currently working their notice; the part time lead GP and the Patient Experience post. There are currently 9.44 vacancies to fill. Care UK, whilst not having a permanent agency quota, uses between 3 and 5 members of staff per week to cover vacancy gaps. These figures do not include sub-contracted services i.e. Dental Care, Mental Health and Podiatry.

The number of referrals to specialist care in January 2020 was 6.5% of the prison population against a Care UK target of fewer than 5%. This was an improvement from 4.4% in December 2019. Generally the prison exceeds the monthly target of specialised referrals to secondary care but this is reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure compliance.

Care UK has a booklet entitled "Making a Complaint Guide" for prisoners. Whilst copies of the guide are placed on the houseblocks, the Board is of the view that they are not always readily available, as sometimes there are no CICS reps to hand them out or they have been removed. In addition, the Health Complaint boxes do not always have forms in them and are not easily available for some prisoners.

There are NHS posters around the prison detailing how to make a complaint and the prisoners can use the kiosk which will be followed up by the Patient Experience Lead. This will result in a meeting where every effort is made to resolve the matters being raised. The prisoner can also talk to the Health Advisory Service (HAS) Line to obtain assistance. The HAS Line is manned by trained prisoners.

The Patient Experience Lead will arrange a clinic with the person concerned in an attempt to resolve the matter. The Board has had examples where numerous meetings have been held with the prisoner and staff have gone over and above what is required to resolve matters and obtain a positive outcome.

12 complaints about the service were received for December 2019 from an average population of 2060. In Dec 2018 there were 38 concerns received. A great deal of work takes place to minimise the need for prisoners to complain, including the Patient Engagement Service and the Concerns Clinic, as well as face-to-face meetings.

Notices are accessible to prisoners, reminding them of the HAS Line and Health Champions who can help them to resolve their problems.

125 Friends and Family Surveys were completed in the month of December 2019 which gave a 92% satisfaction score rating.

The service has started a range of initiatives, including:

- Meet the GP, where prisoners can talk to the GP and houseblock representatives can ask questions
- The Patient Participation Group, where the Heads of Healthcare are invited to attend to discuss matters raised by the houseblock representatives
- Health Champions are now being introduced to each houseblock, whereby a prisoner has been trained to promote well-being, take blood pressures, undertake diabetes checks, weight monitoring and cardiovascular support. The Health Champions are also receiving dementia training.

There are medication hatches on all the wings and 2 nurses are always present when medication is being administered. The staff follow the NMC guidelines on medicine management. There should also be an officer monitoring the prisoners but the Board has been concerned over the year that this has not always been in place, which puts additional pressure on the nurses.

There is a Health Promotion Strategy that has been developed by Care UK and information is sent to the Patient Experience Lead on a monthly basis. Materials that have been put on the houseblocks have included information on prostate cancer, breast cancer and mental health.

Whilst nurses have access to GP records, there has been one occasion when information about a recently transferred prisoner was not entered appropriately onto the system by the transferring prison. This gave rise to a critical comment in a subsequent Prison and Probation Ombudsman report.

6.2 Mental healthcare

There are 10 Registered Mental Health Nurses/mental health professionals and 9 recovery workers. There are 24 in total in the inclusion service.

The average caseload of each team member is 30.

The team reports that gaining up-to-date information from Community Services can be problematical. There is sometimes very little history of previous engagement or treatment on the healthcare computer system (System 1). Time frames can be an

issue when referring cases to the secure estate for prisoners experiencing severe mental health problems. Requesting a mental health assessment for a prisoner who is being released is not an issue. The Approved Mental Health Practitioners (AMP) are responsive to the team at Care UK and there is a good working relationship in place.

In December 2019 there were 200 prisoners receiving clinical treatment on prescription, 13 fewer than in January 2019. 188 prisoners were prescribed Methadone in January 2020.

A discharge lounge has been set up where prisoners due for release can discuss health related matters and obtain advice on prescriptions. Staff should be commended for the range of initiatives being developed to support and promote health and wellbeing.

6.3 Social care

At the end of the reporting year there were 5 prisoners who receive social care support in the prison. There are 3 social workers allocated to the prison from Staffordshire Social Services Department, one of who takes the lead role.

Care UK has regular contact with Staffordshire Social Services Department regarding assessments being carried out for vulnerable prisoners. There is a good process in place for referral, assessment and feedback for the Social Care Contract.

There are no issues generally in obtaining specialist equipment for prisoners once an assessment has been made.

There is a Palliative Care Lead who is an Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP). The service adheres to the Dying Well in Custody Charter and provides an exemplary service to those prisoners who die whilst in custody. Positive feedback has been given about the service from the Coroner's Office and the local hospice. 2 prisoners chose to stay at the prison to receive end of life care rather than go to the hospice or be considered for compassionate release.

If a prisoner is released requiring continuing health and social care services in the community, his assessed needs are invariably catered for.

6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym

The core day of the prison runs from 07.30 in the morning to 19.30 at night. During that time a range of activities are available, following movement to work taking place at 07.45, with the prisoners returning to houseblocks by 11.45. The prisoners return to work or activities at 13.45 and return back to the houseblocks by 16.45. Following the evening meal there is opportunity for 30 mins of exercise. On Friday afternoons prisoners are not expected to attend work or education courses, which gives them time to carry out their domestic duties.

There is an extensive sports centre programme for each week, including circuit training and weights as well as some sports clubs. The sports centre also run courses for Fitness Instructor level 2 and 3, Gym Academy and Life Style Management and Personal Wellbeing.

The prison also provides an artificial football pitch and indoor sports hall, as well as weight rooms and cardiovascular equipment

There are a range of over-50s Saturday morning outside activities during the summer months but during the winter period these do not take place due to health and safety risks.

There are over-50s social clubs, Small Tai Chi (light exercise for the elderly), a choir and music group. All the clubs are well attended.

For Douglas house block, bingo takes place on a weekly basis, along with a Friday raffle for a small hamper. They also hold games and buffet nights.

In November a Community Challenge for Change event was held between staff and prisoners in mixed teams. 86 men and 30 staff took part in a range of activities including rounders, football and badminton.

6.5 Drug rehabilitation

In addition to the A.A. and N.A. meetings taking place, there are several pro-active initiatives to prepare and assist prisoners for release.

The Drug Recovery Team in February 2020 undertook 3 programmes which were very well accepted. 'A Continuity of Care', 'Be Strong' Project and 'Rehabilitation and Assistance in the Community' outlined areas that can be most useful upon release.

Prior to release in collaboration with the staff in the Re-settlement Department, arrangements are finalised in relation to accommodation and work placements.

Drug Testing Compacts are in place on the DRU. These compacts are not used in other houseblocks in the prison.

Elm is supported in its work by the Mental Health and Substance Misuse teams, peer mentors and a range of initiatives to help the men understand the issues in relation to misuse and to help them put strategies in place.

Incidents of relapse following completion of the programme are low.

The success of Elm is a testimony to the commitment of the FLM and his team.

The following statement from a prisoner sums up the ethos of the DRU -

A prisoner who has been through the programme made the following comment "from being a sceptic involved in drug and alcohol misuse for many years and because of this becoming a prolific and persistent offender I am drug and alcohol free "

"The programme has turned my life around"

6.6 Soft skills

The Family Intervention Team has continued to run an innovative programme of sessions throughout the reporting period. They include 2 Parenting Courses, Solihull Approach and the Family Links Nurturing Programme. During the period 3 Nurturing

Programmes with 10 prisoners on each, with a completion of 27 prisoners across all 3 courses, were delivered. Transfers accounted for the 3 missing prisoners.

Additionally, 3 Solihull Approach Programmes were offered with 10 residents on each with a completion of 22 prisoners across all 3 programmes. Again, transfers accounted for 8 missing prisoners.

A Create Project was delivered working with professionals to create a story book and audio CD for Children at which 16 prisoners attended.

During the initial stages of COVID-19 the charity Storybook Dads has enabled prisoners and family members the opportunity to produce 100 DVDs. In addition, instead of just sending the story to families, families have had the unique opportunity to send back a DVD message to their loved one in the prison.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

In April 2019, the education contract and provider were changed from Milton Keynes College to Novus. The Board considers that this change of provider has resulted in a number of significant and challenging staffing issues, which have impacted detrimentally on the quality and quantity of staffing and education provision. Poor staff retention and recruitment and increased sickness levels have resulted in non-delivery of new courses that were stated on the annual delivery plan provided by Novus. Due to higher than anticipated staff vacancies through resignations, additional learning support for residents has also been limited. The timeframe for vacancies to be filled has been a concern.

This in turn has impacted significantly on delivering the average 420 spaces available per session; during some periods this figure fell to less than 300.

An internal quality review identified that the quality of teaching and learning had declined, and differed from the profile provided by Novus. Functional Skills Levels 1 and 2 are a concern, with success rates indicating a further decline in some areas of delivery.

Figures show Novus funding to date has decreased by some 20% compared to the previous provider's spending. This again, has resulted in fewer residents engaging in learning and negatively impacted on the number gaining qualifications.

A major senior management restructuring has further added to capacity issues. A new Education Manager is now being sought and, in the interim, regional staff have stepped in to provide further support.

Residents frequently spoke highly of the support and commitment of teaching staff and of the benefit and enjoyment of their learning. However, the Board considers that the quality and quantity of the education provision has fallen sharply since its last Annual Report and that the delivery plan commitments made by Novus have not been achieved.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The average number of prisoners in full-time employment over the reporting year was 90%. Those that were not in work were either waiting for a suitable activity, had health problems or were unable to leave their house block.

Of those in work, the attendance rate in this area is 97%.

The prison has links with over 23 different employers, training providers and agencies. Work is currently taking place with Absolute with developing links on supporting prisoners into employment upon release. Last year we made reference to the fencing contract that the prison had with a local company and we are pleased to be able to report that a number of men were successful in obtaining employment with the company on release.

The Vocational and Industries team work with over 11 external firms to obtain meaningful work for the prisoners whilst at Oakwood. The work of the team is to be complemented and on the whole is appreciated by the prisoners.

Work is provided for the older Ash prisoners on their houseblock and this is to be commended, as it enables them to be active but within the confines of the safety and security of the houseblock.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The Offender Management Unit (OMU) has the following staffing compliment, Head of OMU Services, Head of OMU Delivery, 20 Prison Offender supervisors, 6 Probation staff and 15 Case Admin staff.

Under Offender Management in Custody (OMiC), initial Offender Assessment System (OASys) reports are the responsibility of the prison when the prisoner arrives from a local prison, post sentencing. OMiC officially started in October 2019 with the private prisons starting in December 2019. Owing to the backlog pre-OMiC, there are currently 391 prisoners (19.9% of the population) that are without an initial report. COVID-19 has, however, allowed the OMU to deal with this backlog, with 139 reports completed since 1st April 2020.

In last year's report we raised concerns that a number of prisoners arriving at Oakwood did not have an OASys report. This is no longer relevant owing to the change in responsibility. However, there are still issues when prisoners are transferred from other resettlement or training prisons without a report.

OMiC is currently running on the interim model until all 9 Probation staff are in post. Prison staff hold all high-risk cases and they are supervised by the Head of OMU Delivery. Currently the transfer of responsibility from prison staff to Prison Offender Managers is on hold owing to COVID-19. The implementation of OMiC is also on hold but all key tasks are being delivered. Additional interventions such as Thinking Skills Programme (TSP), Resolve and Chrysalis are on hold, with no definite date yet for their resumption. There are concerns that some prisoners will not be able to

complete sentence plan objectives due to COVID-19 but this will be reported fully in our next report. In-cell workbooks are still available.

Re-categorisation reviews continue as normal; plans were in place to introduce the roll out of the new re-categorisation framework, which is currently on hold due to COVID-19. This is a digital system and until the roll out the service is operating under PSI 40/201. There are currently 160 prisoners who are Cat D at HMP Oakwood and 1 Cat B prisoner.

There are 125 Lifer prisoners and 25 Indeterminate Sentence prisoners at HMP Oakwood.

Parole Boards and links to Probation are in place with no issues. The use of telephone conferencing has taken place and this has been successful.

The Board receive very few applications that concern the OMU and how it operates during the year. However, this is an area where the prison complaints system received the most complaints but these are mainly in relation to re-categorisation issues.

7.4 Family contact

During the reporting year 69,244 visitors attended the Family Pathway Centre (FPC), of which 77% were over the age of 18. 40.8% of the visitors were male and 68.5% were white European, 18.3% were Asian or of Asian heritage, 8.7% were black or black heritage. At any one time 80% of the prison population has engaged with visitors to the prison.

The FPC is maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and decoration with a regime of regular cleaning, updating and maintenance in place, to ensure compliancy with health and safety requirements at all times. The FPC is constantly reviewed for ways to improve the visitor experience and incorporate the new ways of thinking, such as the experiences brought back from the links with Denmark. The prison held a conference in May 2019, where 130 guests attended. Lord Farmer delivered the key-note speech and presentations were given by the Families Team at HMPPS and Oakwood staff.

The FPC also benefits from the presence of the charity RESTART, which as well as offering family support, runs a food bank and a mini-bus service. During the year several changes have been made to the layout of the FPC, including one corner, which has been funded by visitors, via a donation system of returning locker money to create a soft play area for small children as a safer zone than the normal children's' play area.

Throughout the reporting period, the Family Intervention Team offered a wide range of events, including Family Days, Partner Days, Homework Clubs, Father and Baby Bonding, Outside Visits, Gym Visits, Healthy Living, Lifer Days, Quiz and Karaoke Nights and many more. 2,903 prisoners attended a family event or activity; of those 558 attended a Family Day, 93 Family Learning, 779 were Homework Clubs, 1268 were Kids Clubs, 156 were lounge visits and 49 were Scout sessions.

The team is to be commended on the range of support that is given to prisoners, visitors and children, to enhance and maintain family contact.

7.5 Resettlement planning

‘Your resettlement starts the day of your arrival at HMP Oakwood and continues until your release date.’ This quote is taken from a mural painted by a prisoner.

All prisoners entering Oakwood are allocated a Resettlement Case Worker to enable effective continuity of advice and support throughout their sentence. There is a helpline, Resettlement Advice Line and Prisoner Helpdesk (RALPH) run by prisoners, offering a range of support and advice in relation to issues such as settling benefit claims, finance and debt, housing and employment.

Demand for resettlement is high; 125 to 160 prisoners are released each month. However, the Resettlement Team, working with other support organisations including the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) and various charities and partner agencies including St. Giles Trust, Birmingham Settlement and Job Centre Plus, provide a full service for prisoners preparing to leave the prison. Finding suitable accommodation has become increasingly challenging as a result of housing shortages generally; however 97% of prisoners are released to some form of accommodation, despite some local councils refusing to re-house anyone who has been out of their area or accept a duty of care to those who previously lived in their area.

Twelve weeks prior to release, prisoners are invited to attend a resettlement session to discuss and address their future needs and review their resettlement plan with their case worker. Following this the resettlement plan is entered onto OASys and communicated to their Community Offender Manager. A few days before release prisoners attend a ‘Through the Gate’ group session, to prepare for their release date and discuss the expectations of their licence conditions. In addition, they can also select items of clothing from donated items, to ensure they have adequate and appropriate clothing. Prisoner feedback is positive about the service and support that is provided by the Resettlement Team.

Since the lockdown in March, Resettlement, Parole and Probation Services have been significantly curtailed in their activities. This has exacerbated the challenge of sourcing available accommodation for prisoners on release.

8. The work of the IMB

At the start of the reporting period the Board consisted of 17 members. During the year the Vice Chair retired, a member relocated to HMP Birmingham and 5 members resigned due to workplace pressures.

A new Vice Chair was appointed with his tenure commencing on the 1st January 2020. The remaining members have developed into a committed and dedicated team under the leadership of the Chair and the support of an experienced Board Development Officer.

Members attend on a rota basis from Monday to Friday and work to a prescribed monitoring schedule but with sufficient flexibility to adjust to an environment of ever-changing circumstances. The rota has included some weekend and evening visits.

Board members continue to lead on areas of special interest.

Board members continue to attend a proportion of adjudications and continue to express concerns about those that fail due to the non-attendance of a Reporting Officer. Good Order Reviews take place 3 times a week and a Board member is always in attendance.

Whilst the relationship with the SMT at the prison is good, overall contact with the Director is often limited due to pressure of work. During COVID-19 the Head of Support Services has been extremely helpful to, and supportive of, the Board. However, the Board would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Director and Deputy Director on a more regular basis, particularly in relation to strategic matters.

Visits to the CSU are undertaken and fully reported in the weekly Rota Report, which is submitted to the Director and Controller. All prisoners relocated to the CSU are visited by a Board member within 24 hours or at the earliest opportunity.

An Annual Team Performance Review (ATPR) took place during the year and the ensuing action plan was delivered accordingly.

In January 2020, the Board began a recruitment campaign which attracted 8 applications. 3 interviews took place, including an informal discussion with an applicant previously interviewed for another establishment. This applicant joined the Board just before the lockdown period began in March 2020. Interviews for the remaining 5 applicants will take place as soon as possible.

Throughout the reporting year, the BDO has assisted in the training and support of Board members at HMP Hewell and a hosted visit from the Board at HMP Featherstone.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	20
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	17
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	554
Total number of segregation reviews attended	372

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	20	17
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	15	12
C	Equality	12	11
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	13	20
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	16	37
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	16	41
F	Food and kitchens	13	12
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	72	67
H1	Property within this establishment	33	20
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	78	71
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	4	6
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	60	98
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	45	66
K	Transfers	17	18
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	74	116
	Total number of applications	488	612

Under normal circumstances, the Board would have further investigated the comparative figures for applications to highlight any anomalies or potential trends over the 2-year period. The Board is mindful that there have been a number of serial complainers at HMP Oakwood over the last 12 months. The Board has developed a higher profile due to more interaction with prisoners and prisoner-led groups. Both these factors could impact on the figures.

The Board will undertake an ongoing analysis of data from applications during the current year.



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